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ABSTRACT

The 10 articles (and introduction by Stephen Reuys) in this journal discuss issues of adult literacy/adult basic education from a variety of perspectives. Titles and authors are as follows: "The Boston Adult Literacy Initiative: Moving beyond Initiative" (Silja Kallenbach); "Project FOCUS: Writing through Pictures" (Beatriz M. Strohmeyer); "The Massachusetts Workplace Education Program" (Judy Hikes); "Use of the Language Experience Approach with Non-English Speaking Refugees and Immigrants" (Anthony D'Annunzio, Paige E. Payne); "Pioneering Effective Educational Services for Dyslexic Illiterate Adults" (Carolyn Buell Kidder); "Two Views of Language Minority Issues" (Tomas Kalmar, Fulano de Tal); "The Pittsburgh Literacy Initiative: A Community-Based Model for Meeting Urban Literacy Needs" (Frances Wright); "A Storybook Ending" (Lisa Santagate); "Meeting the Needs of Unprepared Students in Higher Education" (Emilie Steele); and "Between Paulo Freire and Tom Sticht: Adult Education and Job Training at Boston Technical Center" (Stuart Gedal). (NLL)

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CONNECTIONS

A Journal of Adult Literacy

Spring 1989

Volume 3

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Connections: A Journal of Adult Literacy

Connections is a publication of the Adult Literacy Resource Institute, a joint project of Roxbury Community College and the University of Massachusetts /Boston, with partial funding from the Boston Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services. The A.L.R.I. was created in 1983 as part of the Boston Adult Literacy initiative. The purpose of the A.L.R.I. is to provide training, technical assistance and other resources to Boston-area adult basic education programs. We are located at 241 St. Botolph Street in Boston, but our mailing address is: Adult Literacy Resource Institute, c/o Roxbury Community College, 1234 Columbus Avenue, Boston, MA 02120-3400. Our phone number is (617) 424-7947.

Connections is intended to provide an opportunity for adult educators, particularly those in the Boston area, to communicate with colleagues, both locally and nationwide. Adult literacy/adult basic education practitioners need a forum to express their ideas and concerns and to describe their students, their programs, and their own accomplishments; we are glad to be able to continue providing this opportunity.

We welcome your reactions to this journal or to any of the articles in it. We also want to strongly encourage teachers, counselors, administrators, aides, volunteers, students — everyone involved in this field — to think about sharing your experiences, your ideas, your problems and solutions with others by writing for the next issue of *Connections.* Please contact us; we'd be glad to talk with you about your ideas for an article.

The articles included here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Adult Literacy Resource Institute or its sponsoring institutions or funders. Permission must be obtained from the *Connections* Editorial Committee before reprinting an article in another publication or for widespread distribution.

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Introduction

Welcome to the third volume of *Connections*. The articles in this volume, as did those of the previous two, discuss issues of adult literacy/adult basic education from a variety of perspectives.

The three articles by Silja Kallenbach, Frances Wright and Judy Hikes all describe city or state-wide initiatives, each of which forms the umbrella for a large number of related programs. Kallenbach and Wright discuss city-wide adult literacy initiatives in Boston and Pittsburgh, respectively, while Hikes focuses on the state-wide Massachusetts Workplace Education Program, which supports ABE and ESL efforts at a variety of worksites throughout the Commonwealth.

Stuart Gedal's article discusses the life and times of a single program, a basic skills program in Boston set up specifically to prepare students interested in entering particular job training programs located within the same agency.

Two articles, one by Beatriz Strohmeyer and one by Anthony D'Annunzio and Paige E. Payne, describe specific experimental projects undertaken at their programs. The goal of the Boston-based project discussed in the first article was to promote students' English proficiency and first- and second-language literacy through the use of photography, while the Philadelphia-based project in the second article explored the use of bilingual tutors and certain specific approaches (including language experience) in teaching ESL.

One teacher's experiences are the subject of Lisa Santagate's article describing her work as an ESL home tutor with a Cambodian family in Boston.

The remaining articles deal with various issues in adult literacy/adult basic education. Tomas Kalmar (and his compadre Fulano de Tal) explore in personal terms the situation of language minorities in this linguistically Anglocentric country. Carolyn Buell-Kidder continues the discussion of learning disabilities which she began in the previous volume of this journal, shows how some programs are responding to the needs of dyslexic students and argues that much more needs to be done. Emilie Steele looks at the history and current status of basic skills programs for students at the college level.

Although the articles in this volume cover a very broad stretch on the full spectrum of issues and aspects of adult literacy, there are, of course, many connections among them. The articles by Kallenbach and Wright on city-wide literacy initiatives allow for an interesting comparison of the different approaches adopted by these two cities. Hikes and Gedal both discuss literacy programs that focus on occupational or employment-related needs, while Gedal and Steele can be seen as viewing adult literacy from the perspective of two very different goals of adult students — entering job training programs and entering higher education. D'Annunzio/Payne, Strohmeyer and Kalmar all deal with issues related to second language learning and literacy. Two of them (D'Annunzio/Payne and Santagate) are working with populations from Southeast Asia, while the other two are focused primarily (though not exclusively in Kalmar's case) on the Spanish-speaking community. The use of visual media, specifically photography, in ESL and literacy contexts is explored with both of these groups in the articles by Strohmeyer and Santagate.

And finally, two articles (those by Kallenbach and Strohmeyer) draw from experiences with specifically community-based adult education programs (as defined, for instance, by the Association for Community-Based Education), which was an intended theme of this issue. Others draw on experiences in different settings, including the workplace, job training programs, one-to-one tutoring situations, higher education and other types of Adult Basic Education programs, all of which serve to highlight the importance of diversity in program type and setting in meeting the needs and goals of diverse adult student populations.

As always, we hope you will find many more connections for yourself among these various articles.

Steve Reuys

The Boston Adult Literacy Initiative: Moving Beyond Initiative

by Silja Kallenbach

I recently had an opportunity to compare notes with colleagues in Houston. After my presentation on the Boston Adult Literacy Initiative (ALI), the president of Houston's mayoral READ Commission commented on how unrealistic and inconceivable it was for Houston to attempt to replicate the ALI model. He proceeded to ask that I not focus on public sector involvement in the ALI in my subsequent talk. As I tried to revise my presentation, I realized I would have very little to say.

My visit to Houston confirmed what I had noticed during previous encounters with adult literacy contacts in other cities and states. Boston's experience with and approach to adult literacy education is, if not unique, shared by less than a handful of other places in the U.S., most notably New York City. It is an approach that would not have been possible without the over one million dollars in federal Community Development Block Grant funds the City of Boston dedicated to it on an annual basis from 1983-1986.

The Boston Adult Literacy Initiative Begins

The story of the Boston ALI starts in the early 1980's. The 1980 census statistics which showed that one out of every three Boston adults did not have a high school diploma painted a picture of Boston that was in discord with its image as a cradle of higher education. This image was also inconsistent with the poverty statistics for the city, which showed 42% of the state's poor residing in Boston. Thousands of disenfranchised adults were living within the shadows of the city's rapidly multiplying high-rises, condominiums and offices, locked out of benefits or participation in the city's prosperity. A lack of basic skills in reading, writing and math precluded many adults from even attempting to improve their circumstances. The city's skills training system was reaching only a small number of these adults. Many could not pass the training program entrance tests; most would not even attempt to do so. The desire to address this situation led to a vision of a comprehensive education and training system which adults could access at the most basic level and progress through to training and economic self-sufficiency.

To carry out its vision, Boston created the Boston Adult Literacy Initiative, sponsored by the Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services (JCS). Based on months of planning, community meetings and consultations with experts in the field, the city decided on a model and basic principles for its ambitious undertaking. The chosen model differed from many others nationally in that it called for the establishment of learning centers with teachers and support staff and a resource center to provide staff development and technical assistance. It was not a volunteer-based model. The ALI was to take adult literacy education far beyond tutoring reading. The program design required a minimum of eight hours of instruction per week per student. It also included supplemental tutoring by volunteers recruited and trained by the resource center.

Another characteristic that unifies ALI programs was that they were all community-based. They not only operated in the community from which they recruited students, but they also actively cultivated their ties to those communities. Some programs interpreted their mission more broadly than others, but all were rooted in their respective communities. For many programs the importance of community orientation went far beyond practicality for recruitment. They viewed themselves as a dimension of community development and a means of empowerment of not just individuals, but of entire communities. Much to its credit the city favored this type of orientation in its planning and funding decisions.

Initial funding decisions were based on the quality of the proposed program design, as well as service to the city's major linguistic minorities, public housing residents and low-income adults across Boston neighborhoods. These decisions gave birth to several new adult literacy programs and a vital boost to others already in existence. The city was willing to take the risk of supporting promising grassroots learning centers that did not yet have a solid track record and might have even professed a very progressive ideology.

Through a highly competitive process, 14 programs were initially chosen for membership in the ALI in 1983, out of 50 applicants.

The ALI model also included funding for a resource center and an External (high school) Diploma Program in partnership with the Boston Public Schools. The External Diploma Program marked the first occasion for the Boston Public Schools to formally associate with alternative, community-based learning centers. The resource center grant was awarded to the Adult Literacy Resource Institute, which is cosponsored by Roxbury Community College and the University of Massachusetts/Boston. The Resource Institute became the second organization of its kind in the country. (The first was the Literacy Assistance Center in New York City.) Its mission was to provide technical assistance and staff development opportunities to the ALI learning centers, to set up a resource library, and to recruit, train and place volunteers. This mission has since expanded to include many exciting special projects, such as teacher training to teach critical thinking skills, the publishing of student writings, and the revision of the Massachusetts driver education manual.

Program and Student Diversity

From its inception, diversity of programs has been a trademark of the ALI. Each learning center has its unique characteristics and strengths. At ABCD, adults and youth attend classes side by side, and transition classes help students make their program entry and exit more successful. At Alianza Hispana, students study basic skills in Spanish along with English as a Second Language (ESL). Cardinal Cushing Center's ESL students can also take elective courses, including learning English through photography and, soon, video. The Charlestown Community School has developed an External Diploma Program (EDP) for mothers who are public housing residents in coordination with Head Start. At Condon Community School students find a three track GED program designed for varying learning paces and skill levels.

The Indochinese students at East Boston Community School are drawn into planning and evaluating the program through dedicated Khmer and Vietnamese bilingual workers. At the Haitian Multi-Service Center, Haitian college student interns receive training in ESL teaching, and the students have the option of also studying math and Creole. The Jackson/Mann Community School gives its students a rare opportunity to enroll in a Next Step vocational readiness course after they have received their GED's; students also participate actively in program planning and administration at Jackson/Mann. At Jamaica Plain Community School, students have access to free child care and van transportation. The students who complete ESL instruction at the Jewish Vocational Service's Indochinese Literacy Program can continue to JVS's unique diploma program — the only such program in the city that caters to non-native speakers of English.

At Mujeres Unidas en Accion, Latina women find extensive support services, their peers on the staff and and the Board of Directors, and a collective inviting their full participation in all facets of program operations. The Quincy School Community Council's ESL program in Chinatown follows a self-developed Cantonese-English curriculum. There, as well as at United South End Settlements, a computer resource lab is integrated into the program. At WAITT House in Roxbury, a career assessment and counseling component helps students make informed decisions about their next steps. The mostly Arabic students of Washington Hill Community Association are drawn in to participate in social activities in their new community. Women find a supportive learning environment at WEAVE/YWCA.

Together these programs served 1,841 adults in fiscal year 1988, of whom slightly over 50% were ESL students and the rest ABE and EDP or GED students. Most were low-income (75%) and women (66%). People of color were in the majority at 74%. The average length of stay in the programs was 8.2 months. Through its automated student records processing, the ALI has been able to amass quite extensive data about the demographic characteristics of its students as well as their reasons for leaving the program and the progress they made. This data informs program planning at JCS.

In FY '88, 20% of those who terminated obtained a high school diploma (EDP) or a GED certificate; 27% completed the next highest level in ESL and ABE; 20% entered a vocational training program or college and 20% left to take a job, for better or for worse as far as their education is concerned; 38% had left before completing their studies because they either moved, had health, family, child care or scheduling problems or simply lost interest.

The educational progress data for these students is still being aggregated by the funding agency. Of course, the actual scope of learning and accomplishments that took place for the individual students is far more extensive and fascinating. I know this anecdotally. However, until we fully document (hopefully in a participatory manner) the how and what of the ALI, that information will not be available. This project has been on the ALI's agenda for a few years now, but it has yet to be realized. The ALI has a wealth of experiences and practices to share with the rest of the world, if only time and resources permitted their documentation.

Some of the partnerships the ALI has forged are also worthy of documentation. In addition to the ones I have already mentioned, the ALI's partnership with the Boston Housing Authority (BHA) has been exemplary in many respects. For the past three years, the BHA has allocated $100,000 through a competitive bidding process to ALI programs to expand and enhance literary services to public housing residents. Last year, for example, these supplemental grants enabled six ALI learning centers to hire Community Teacher Aides or run a satellite program for BHA mothers or do outreach in specific developments or provide van transportation in the evenings. These grants have shown that little funding can go a long way if there already is a good core program.

Assumptions and Expectations

While many of the operating principles set up by the city were commendable, some of the underlying assumptions were, at best, unexamined. The most prominent and troublesome of them has been the notion that adult literacy education would quite automatically lead adults to employment and training. The fact that roughly one half of the students attending ALI programs already had jobs and could not afford to quit those jobs to enroll in a training program that might lead to a better job was not factored into the expectations, until recently. The extensive academic, vocational and psychological preparation adults generally need in order to take the next step and the corresponding costs of providing that preparation largely escaped the funders' attention.

The interconnectedness between adult literacy and a whole host of far less solvable problems that affect our students' lives and get in the way of the best ambitions is also not a negligible factor. The drug war going on in Roxbury alone is capable of stopping many adults in their tracks. Boston's housing crisis has led other adult literacy students to transiency and homelessness. A dose of adult literacy will not do away with these problems. I say that, not because I don't believe in the tremendous transformative powers of adult literacy education, but because it seems that those who control the resources for it often have very unrealistic expectations and time frames.

Perhaps it is more fair to say that most funders have tended to expect results from adult literacy programs similar to those they expect from their vocational training counterparts — namely, entrance into jobs. In this respect, the Boston ALI has begun to move away from such narrow and often inappropriate focus. The ALI performance measures were revised for FY '89 based on the recommendations of a task force that included six program operators and me. While there is still plenty of room for improvement, we all agreed that the revisions were a step in the right direction. For example, rather than simply counting job entries, we introduced a new optional performance category for the attainment of "Career Enhancement Activities." These are activities that were already a part of the curriculum in most programs and that prepare adults to make more informed career decisions and aim to improve their understanding of job-search-related issues. The completion of six of the 13 activities constitutes a positive outcome.

In this era of accountability, we hardly have an option to not track outcomes and program performance in myriad ways. It is almost perverse how strictly adult literacy education — this least funded and most marginal branch of education — is held accountable for its performance.

In grappling with the dilemma of performance standards, we spent considerable time and resources in designing our own benchmarks to measure students' educational progress, rather than going with standardized testing. Program operators have played a key role in this process and their expertise and participation were critical in charting new directions for the ALI.

Indeed, there is nothing basic about Adult Basic Education. It is as complex a branch of education as any, but one we know little about. We know a lot about how children acquire literacy but relatively little has been done to understand how adults learn these skills. We have yet to figure out what really constitutes success for adult literacy programs: is it purely academic progress or does it also include attaining personal goals, such as getting a driver's license or learning how to deal with your child's school more effectively, or getting a job? The question of how to measure adult literacy programs' effectiveness is being discussed in adult literacy circles throughout the country. Yet very few people claim to be satisfied with the answers they have come up with.

In recent years, the role of affective areas of learning in the acquisition and application of literacy skills has received increasing recognition. After all, what good are the skills if you do not have the confidence to apply them and have a sense of dignity and self-worth? For many adults, the realization that they are intelligent and very capable of learning has been one of their greatest learning experiences. These accomplishments do not show up in any performance measures I have seen.

Considering that the ALI is a network that was created top-down and is bound together by a common funding source, I have been impressed by the degree of cooperation and coordination among the programs. Cross-referrals, consultations, classes visiting each other and, on a few occasions, joint proposals, exemplify the cooperative spirit among these programs. This cohesion has also expressed itself in assertive advocacy for changes in certain policies and performance measures and, most recently, for a role in the hiring of the current ALI director.

Coming Together

On May 14, 1988, the ALI programs reinforced their ties and unity in an all-day ALI conference. Nearly 200 students and staff members attended this "ALI Day" on a beautiful spring Saturday. The planning team included students and staff from various programs and backgrounds. Never before had students and staff members from so many different ALI programs come together to discuss issues of common concern, never mind planning an event of this nature or magnitude. (I often wondered why we didn't do this earlier.) One member of the planning group felt that the planning process in itself would have made the day worthwhile even if nothing happened. A lot happened.

Ten workshops were held in the morning with topics ranging from domestic violence and parenting to immigration and job training options. During a sumptuous, partially potluck lunch, we were entertained by Puerto Rican singing, an Arabic fortuneteller and a Cambodian fashion show. A student from the Haitian Center presented the center with a painting and talked about the aspects of Haitian culture it represented. Five brave students read their own poetry or prose which was soon to be published. A panel of program representatives shared with the others how they were trying to promote community control in their programs. A student-written play about AIDS (in Spanish) had us laughing in spite of the serious subject.

For the most part, the day seemingly had little to do with adult literacy. Arabic fortunetelling and domestic violence do not appear on the surface to exactly relate to education. Yet, they do — they are prime examples of the breadth adult literacy education has to assume to be meaningful to the adults who enroll in our programs and to enable them to be who they are with dignity. The singing, poetry and paintings gave us a glimpse of our students' creative talent. The connections between creative thinking, the arts and adult basic education are beginning to be explored by some ALI programs. This is still mostly uncharted, but potentially powerful territory, if it can find broader support.

The ALI Day was a refreshing change from the other occasions on which the programs and their students have come together under the ALI "banner," for these had been mostly limited to rallies and testimonies at hearings to obtain continued funding. In 1986, the ALI faced virtual extinction under the cumulative impact of federal budget cuts that affected the ALI's main funding source, the CDBG funds. The ALI programs were about to grind to a halt unless the state legislature would provide at least 50% of the funding. At the eleventh hour, funding was appropriated to the tune of $850,000. This enabled the programs to maintain their operations, albeit, as usual, without any across the board cost of living adjustments.

Conclusion

Thus far, the ALI has been able to hang on to its annual state allocation, although each year the programs are held in suspense, typically until one month or less before the new fiscal year. In retrospect, one might conclude that the ALI has enjoyed relative stability. In reality, hundreds of students, teachers and other program staff spend the latter part of each fiscal year with a sense of insecurity about their program's future. In my mind, real stability would imply that as long as you are doing a good job and the need is there, you can expect to be supported as a program. Not so — witness the recent loss of Gateway Cities funding of which over 20% is used to fund ESL education in Boston.

I have not yet seen many indications that we can rest assured of some real, i.e. sustained and reality-based, commitment to keeping the ALI or adult literacy education overall alive. I hope that I am proven wrong, but what I see is that in Massachusetts the field is as marginal as ever and, in fact, a few million dollars poorer in FY 89 than the year before, statewide. Despite the fact that adult literacy services are more developed in Boston than in many other cities in the country, we are still far from meeting the need. We have not done away with waiting lists for classes at almost all ALI programs, inadequate facilities and shamefully low salaries. I wonder how many legislative breakfasts, briefings, bulletins and hearings it will take to really touch the consciousness of those who control the resources.

Silja Kallenbach is currently associate director of the Boston Adult Literacy Fund. She was the director of the Boston Adult Literacy Initiative at the Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services from 1985 to 1988. She went to the ALI after five years of program development at Mujeres Unidas en Accion, a community-based learning center for Latina women.

Project FOCUS: Writing Through Pictures

by Beatriz M. Strohmeyer

(Editor's Note: The following selections are taken and adapted from On FOCUS, *a handbook for teachers and students about Project FOCUS, which was a pilot activity on writing through pictures conducted at El Centro del Cardenal (the Cardinal Cushing Center) in Boston during 1987-88. The examples of writing and photos by students included in the article were produced during the second cycle of FOCUS and are taken from the section of the handbook called* 'La Niñez y la Familia.' *(Childhood and Family). A copy of* On FOCUS *can be obtained from El Centro del Cardenal, 1375 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02118.)*

Introduction

For 31 years, El Centro del Cardenal (The Cardinal Cushing Center) has been providing a comprehensive array of services to Boston's Latino community. The agency's goal has always been to provide the educational and supportive services necessary to empower the community to become active participants in the larger society. One of the vehicles to attain this goal is Project HABLE (Hispanic Adults Basic Literacy in English). As partners with Boston's Adult Literacy Initiative and the University of Massachusetts' Family Literacy Project, we are always searching for new and compelling ways to engage students in the creation and direction of their own education. Thus, Project FOCUS was created: an activity aimed at enhancing the language and literacies of the students in the program through the use of photography.

The image market is overflowing with pictures of the poor and economically and socially disadvantaged as perceived by professionals, who are merely documenting a problem in the tradition of documentary photographers such as Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans, among others. Intentionally or unintentionally, photographers place their own judgmental values upon the images they capture. And accurate documentation of a situation cannot be solely achieved by the photographer's image of the same, unless he or she is part of the reality portrayed in the photo. Testimony, visual, written or both, provided by the subject whose situation is being examined, can produce a more focused definition of his/her reality. Evidence of this is beautifully presented in Wendy Ewald's *Portraits and Dreams* (1985), in which children of the Appalachians so eloquently define their own world through pictures and tales in an honest and yet empowering manner. Furthermore, the educational application of photography is also evident in the work of Deborah Barndt and the Participatory Research Group in Toronto, Canada. Their work entitled *Getting There* is an exemplary result of active student involvement and direction of their own educational process.

The concept of FOCUS is, thus, inspired by the work of many who have come before us, among whom are John Berger, and of course, Paulo Freire, and by my own interest in photography, the arts and their role in education. Nevertheless, the project's development and evolution is solely shaped by its participants: the students of the HABLE/Family Literacy Program, Loren McGrail (ESL Family Literacy Specialist at El Centro), and fortunately, me. (I say "fortunately" because it gave me a creative break from the administrative and bureaucratic routine that comes with being Director of Education.) The project also had the participation of Aida Quiles (formerly of the Adult Literacy Resource Institute), who shared her energy and talents during the initial stages of the project.

Development of the Project

Like many community adult education programs, ours is committed to actively involving the students in defining and taking charge of their education while they upgrade their communication skills in their native language, Spanish, and in English. At the same time, there is a great lack of materials that reflect the students' immediate cultural reality, which would naturally engage them in their own educational process. As teachers and as learners, we understand that materials which are relevant and culturally and historically sensitive to the students will generate enthusiasm.

According to Paulo Freire's and Ivan Illich's educational philosophy, learners should be the creators and directors of their own education. "In the literacy methodology of Paulo Freire, drawings were initially used to focus on important elements of the social reality of the participants. The process of involving students in describing and analyzing the visualized situations of their daily lives aided the literacy process as well as the process of developing critical social consciousness." (Barndt, *Getting There*, Participatory Research Group, Toronto, Canada, p. 15) Barndt further supports this methodology by stating that if students themselves make the visuals, the literacy process follows naturally.

In our program, and probably in most programs or schools, the most satisfying and successful classes have been those which involve the collective production of materials, whether a Recipe Book, a Book of Folk Remedies or a video. In any case, students feel naturally comfortable and supported when working together, and they take great pride in coming up with a product they can share with others. And of course, this also applies to teachers, providing them with an opportunity to be equal partners in the learning process. For these reasons, we decided that Project FOCUS would utilize a participatory approach, thus empowering the participants to develop the project in its entirety. To further emphasize the participatory nature of the project, FOCUS was offered as an **elective course** within the HABLE program. Most importantly, the fact that this project had no precedent, i.e., no set curriculum and no expertise in using the rather complicated and finicky cameras, made it a truly participatory and collective experience.

As an **elective course,** this meant that the students from different groups or levels of ability in either English or Spanish could participate in the project if they so desired. The facilitators of the project saw this as an opportunity to encourage students to express themselves in any language they chose. Months before, some students had expressed interest in doing Spanish literacy activities and Spanish GED besides their ESL classes. However, when some Spanish language activities were introduced in class, there was a level of resistance on the part of some students. Oftentimes, students would say, "I am here to learn English. Teach me English..." So, with FOCUS being an elective in which students chose, not only most of the activities, but the language in which they wanted to communicate, the "resistance" or the "taboo" of infusing Spanish writing in an ESL program was overcome. Further more, with the project facilitators operating between languages, the activity became evidently "allowable" to the participants.

The experiences revealed in the *On FOCUS* book are based on work done over two teaching cycles of approximately three months each. The activities, the approaches and the treatment of language and picture taking were dictated by the stage of development of the project and by its participants. Naturally, there were significant differences between the two cycles.

Cycle I

As I already mentioned, the first cycle of FOCUS was an elective course selected by students from different levels. Also, there weren't any materials or previous experiences to guide us along. Prior to organizing the "class," though, Loren, Aida and I had endless lists of ideas for the project, most of which were later eliminated as students forged their own. Nevertheless, one thing we did establish was the role and the level of participation each was to have, based on our individual strengths and weaknesses, i.e., Loren would offer guidance in the writing process, Aida would guide students through activities aimed at defining themselves, and I would focus on activities to help develop an eye for picture taking. While this is slightly oversimplified, it is important to mention because it helped students understand that they, as individuals, also had specific talents and abilities, which, when combined, would make the project whole.

All these roles evolved as the project developed, and also, everyone switched roles around as we gained new abilities and skills. For example, one student gained excellent command of the camera and so others relied on him to teach them to use it or to help solve technical problems. I, on the other hand, learned a great deal about writing from Loren, which I began to apply as students wrote in Spanish.

During the first cycle of FOCUS, a majority of the students' writing was in Spanish. This probably happened because Aida and I, being Latinas and Spanish-speaking, tipped the balance a bit for Loren. Also, the mixed levels of the students required that most communication take place in Spanish. More significant, though, is the fact that self-expression and self-definition were initially more important than "language development" or correctness in either language. Also, during the first cycle (definitely more than in the second cycle), Loren, Aida and I did a lot of modeling of the process in the first few meetings as a group, so as to get the project rolling along. Students wanted to know exactly what they were getting involved in, and initially demanded much guidance from us.

The first time we met as a group we spent a good amount of time discussing the project and its possible outcomes. All the participants expressed why they were there and what they expected. This type of discussion took place many times throughout the duration of the project. We then plunged right into an exploration of images and how we react to them, utilizing some Polaroid slides of familiar scenes to the students: objects, people, and corners in and around El Centro, the location of the project. This activity served the dual purpose of introducing students to the different elements of photography, e.g. light, focus or composition, and of providing them with the sense that, as photographers, they are empowered to choose how they want to present their subject. What followed is what set the stage for the rest of the project. There is something to photography in terms of its abstractness that allows people to conjure up an opinion, especially when there are no words attached to the image. Regardless of their level or language ability, not a single student in the class proceeded to simply describe factual information of what was in the picture, but rather, took it (the photo) to another level. Instead, they wrote what the image invoked in them. More often than not, this occurred in Spanish.

For a moment, we thought there was something we were doing wrong, as we had anticipated that students would produce materials in both English and Spanish, and in equal amounts. So I asked the group point-blank whether this was of concern to them, since at one point they had indicated that they wanted to "learn English." To this, they replied that "English will come later..., when we feel comfortable with what we are doing." We found that when students wrote about strong emotions or deeper feelings, they did so in Spanish, if they could write in Spanish. Otherwise, they would use English, or a combination of both, either orally or in writing. Working in a bilingual writing project, both students and teachers should bear in mind that both languages are equally important, and ultimately, the students will decide which language best expresses what they want to get across.

Cycle II

In contrast with the first cycle of Project FOCUS, the second cycle was not an elective in the sense that students from all levels could participate. Upon completing one cycle of elective courses, students performed an evaluation of the overall "experiment," and determined (by a majority) that only the more advanced level groups would participate in the electives offered. By this time, only Computers and FOCUS were offered as requested by the students.

One of Loren's Family Literacy classes was composed of students with an intermediate level in English. When we presented them with the choice of participating in FOCUS two days per week, they agreed. So, we were on again.

The second time around, we had a precedent and the experience we gained from the first cycle. And above all, we had the first group's work to help us embark on the project. There were also books on photography and slides, and other ways of expressing what pictures do to us. Students especially appreciate the fact that there are no boundaries on what was right or wrong. Whatever interpretation they offered about an image was respected. And there were many different interpretations, for the emphasis was on expressing feelings. Students saw photography as a tool not only to report experiences, but to interpret and react to them as well.

Several exciting things happened in the second cycle. Angel, a student who had participated in the project the previous cycle, joined us. He was instrumental in guiding the other project participants through several activities. For instance, he trained the new project participants on the use of the Polaroids, and also, on different occasions, he talked to the students about his experiences the previous cycle, thereby setting the stage for photo and writing activities. Something else that happened in this cycle is that students were interested in developing photos and writing around a theme. Out of this cycle emerged the "units" on *Mothers are Teachers* and *Neighborhood*, marking a difference from the "free-form" works of the first cycle. This outcome may be partly attributed to the fact that this group was used to working as a "class," and already had an established group dynamic built in, whereas the participants from the first cycle of FOCUS were individuals from different classrooms.

Nonetheless, I find that the possibilities of what students choose to create and produce are limitless and equally fascinating. Those of us involved in the project are certain that, if implemented in another setting, another program, or with a different population of students, the project would yield different products every time.

The Students and their Work

The students who participated in FOCUS cannot be categorized under a certain "type." They did not undergo a selection process to get involved in the project. On the contrary, they chose to get involved because something attracted them when they received the initial project description included among the other elective course offerings. After discussing further general details on the project in a group, some students decided to leave and others opted to stay.

Within the two groups of students in FOCUS (six in each group), there were different levels of ability in English, Spanish and general education. Moreover, there was a wide range of cultural differences in life experiences. This range included young adults with ample formal educational experiences, refugees with survival literacy skills suffering from war-related trauma, immigrants who had lived in U.S. urban centers most of their lives, and so on. Whatever our backgrounds and experiences, the project meant different things to everyone, and it had a different effect on each individual. For some, the project had transformational powers, allowing them to get in touch with their creative selves; for others, it served as a bridge to literacy; and yet, for most, it was a vehicle to increase self-confidence through a process of self-definition and analysis of their present situation.

What follows are selected works by the participants of Project FOCUS from October 1987 through June 1988. Some of these works are fragments of larger units and are, therefore, intended to be viewed along with other works from the particular unit. The students' work can be viewed in entirety in the handbook, *On FOCUS.*

Beatriz Strohmeyer has worked in youth and adult education programs in Boston's Latino community since 1975. For 14 years Beatriz worked at El Centro del Cardenal as a teacher and administrator, and she is currently Director of Education at HOPE (Hispanic Office of Planning and Evaluation).

Ana Rodriguez photographed her children on the sidewalk outside her home in Villa Victoria. Other photographs she made were also of children playing outdoors. Her poem entitled "La Niñez" (Childhood) speaks about the joy they reflect when running and playing outdoors. She wishes she were a child again to play together with them and remembers her childhood, the most beautiful period in one's life.

LA NIÑEZ

Me gusta ver los niños jugando
porque en ellos se refleja
toda su hermosa alegria.
Unos corren y otros brincan
y otros saltan de alegria.

Quisiera ser una niña
para estar juntos con ellos
y recordar aquellos tiempos
como cuando yo era una niña.

Si te pones a contemplar
toda esa hermosa niñes
no la cambia por ninguna
porque es la mas hermosa
del mundo.
Ana Rodriguez

Margarita Henriquez had written a piece about not having the ability or the imagination to take pictures or write an original piece. Imagine our surprise when she brought the photographs and writing on "Childhood."

Oh Childhood! "Beautiful time of Life!" I want to be a child again.

In childhood, children don't have problems, childhood is like a candy that gives us life, a "Sweet Time."

When the children begin school, this is like a glass of water that is half full, half of life. They are drinking from the glass of life.

During this time, they start to learn. And to know about the world. They never think about problems that other people have.

They aren't worried about these kinds of things. They are living a happy life.

In other words, they are having a good time.
Margarita Henriquez

The particular theme of "childhood" was born of the commonalities shared by all the project participants, observers of our childhood through the experiences of our own children. The theme then evolved into "Mothers are Teachers," sparked by Angela Montero and guided by Loren McGrail.

MOTHER'S TEACHERS

I taught my daughter to eat by herself, when she was a baby. I also taught her how to play, to use the toilet, to find her clothes and put them on.

When my daughter was 5 years old, she told me — "Mom, I want to go to School. I sent her to private School for several months. Soon we came to live in Boston. Here she went to School.

Now she is 7 years old. Everyday I help her made the homework, and to look for something. Sometimes — she is lazy and she said, "Mom help me tie my shoes." When I don't have the time I said, "I can't." She said, "Yes, you can because you are my mother and mothers help their children."

Now she likes to go to School and share with me her class. I want my daughter to learn good habits for a better life.
Angela Montero

The Massachusetts Workplace Education Program

by Judy Hikes

A garment factory in a southeastern Massachusetts city: There is a turn-of-the-century look and feel to the roomful of women bent over the large, loudly reverberating sewing machines. They reach quickly for the pre-cut clothing pieces stacked beside them; they are paid "piecework," by the number of pieces they finish, not by the hour. Nearly all the women who work here are from the Azores Islands, and the main language spoken in the factory is Portuguese. At five o'clock the workers turn off their machines one by one. Ten of the women, instead of going home, move to a corner of the shop floor where there are several tables covered with plastic cloths — the "cafeteria." In a few minutes their English teacher comes in and greets everyone. She props up a small blackboard and class begins. Along with standard English grammar and vocabulary they discuss typical job situations, such as what to do when your machine breaks down. This means loss of money to workers who work piecework; one woman had had to deal with the problem just that afternoon.

A machine tool factory in western Massachusetts: We enter an old, high-ceilinged, hangar-like building. Men wearing earphones for protection from the noise stand at machine tooling work stations. The work stations are battered-looking, and large grease spots cover parts of the floor. In a small enclosed room in the center of the plant, another workplace class is going on, this time in basic math. There is a GED class in a room nearby. "We constructed these rooms especially for the classes," the plant training manager told us proudly. We learned, however, that at first, workers attending the classes did not feel so proud about needing help. They asked for shades on the windows of the rooms so their fellow workers would not see them there. After several workers got their GED's and helped to recruit new people for the classes, the feeling of shame was lessened. Enthusiasm for the program has grown. Like the garment shop, the machine shop is a "mature industry" factory, two of the many struggling to survive in today's changing economy.

A large hotel in a Boston suburb, part of a major national chain: The spacious lobby with chandeliers and luxurious sofas is in sharp contrast to the well-used, pre-high-tech machinery and buildings of the two factories. Industry growth patterns bear out the contrast: the service industry is thriving while there has been a sharp decline in manufacturing jobs. When the workplace class teacher takes us through an almost-invisible door in one wall of the lobby, we are suddenly in a narrow, rather dark corridor where housekeepers and kitchen workers pass by quickly. This is the "back of the house," the workers' territory.

A group of workers gathers in the "Game Room," where they sit around two tables set up next to the video machines. The smell of chlorine drifts in from the nearby swimming pool. The hum of conversation has snatches of Creole, Spanish and Portuguese. In one corner is the typical workplace class "blackboard," an easel with a pad of newsprint. Anna, the teacher, carries the "bag of tricks" (common objects, file cards, felt-tipped pens), indispensable to an ESL teacher and especially useful in this multi-level class. Advanced students have had to become adept at helping others who do not read and write well. The various conversations turn into warm greetings for Anna and me, and then everyone turns to the lesson.

My visits, as coordinator of the Massachusetts Workplace Education Program, took me to three Massachusetts workplaces where state-sponsored workplace education classes have operated. Classes at the two factories are still going on. The hotel class has closed down, although the workers still need and want English classes. The Game Room, where video machines competed with lessons, was not suitable, but the hotel never came up with another room. When the personnel manager, who was the company's main supporter of the class, was out sick for more than a month, the learning provider (a nearby community college) found out that there were too many obstacles to running a class there and pulled out.

The Statewide Program

There are currently sixteen projects that are alive and well in the Massachusetts Workplace Education Program. In addition to factories, other sites include nursing homes, large city hospitals, clothing distribution centers, large and small high-tech manufacturing firms, a paper company, two union halls, a sporting goods manufacturer and a large university. The latter offers ABE, GED and ESL classes to its grounds crew, maintenance workers, drivers and kitchen staff. The Workplace Education Program (WEP) is jointly funded by the Department of Education (DOE), the Department of Employment and Training (DOT) and the Executive Office of Labor (EOL). In 1987-88, approximately 750 workers attended workplace ABE, ESL or GED classes.

The WEP's two main goals are: to strengthen the state economy by upgrading the English, math and literacy skills of the workforce and to give workers access to basic education classes at the workplace, which will, it is hoped, enhance their opportunities for job advancement. Of the current 16 WEP projects, 11 are ESL, four are ABE/GED, and three offer ABE, ESL and GED. The workers who attend classes range from recent immigrants to native-born workers with more than 20 years on the job.

A four-person steering committee formulates overall policies for the program and makes decisions on the funding of individual projects. The committee is composed of one person from each of the three funding agencies — DET, DOT and EOL — and one person from the Commonwealth Literacy Campaign, which has an advisory/resource role. A State Workplace Education coordinator, hired by the steering committee, does the field work (project monitoring and technical assistance) and oversees day-to-day operations.

WEP grant funds go out to individual projects through the local Service Delivery Area offices, who are co-monitors (along with the state coordinator) and are responsible for fiscal administration and data collection. To initiate WEP projects, the steering committee forwards requests for proposals to the SDA's, who elicit proposals from local learning providers. After initital review by the SDA's and the Regional Employment Boards, proposals are sent to the steering committee for final review. Local project statistics, which are entered monthly into DET's Management Information System at local SDA offices, can be retrieved at any time at DET's central office in Boston by the steering committee or the state coordinator. (The problem that remains with the MIS is that it is set up for JTPA statistics, and so far it is difficult to enter any other data.)

Initiating a Workplace Education Project

The WEP grant application process is initiated by a learning provider, a company, a union or an SDA. (The "learning provider" could be a community based organization, a school department adult learning center, a community college, a state college or university, or a private non-profit adult education provider.) The need for basic education at a company is determined by speaking with company managers, union representatives and workers, and, if necessary, doing a literacy audit of the tasks needed to perform jobs. If there is a clearly established need and the company is interested, the local SDA planner is contacted (s/he may already have been involved in this pre-planning stage), and plans begin for writing the proposal. The group that does the planning and proposal-writing will eventually be the project's advisory board. The local partners are: representatives from the learning provider, the SDA, the company, and the union or, in the absence of a union, a representative from the workers. The board may also include company supervisors, city or town officials and other interested parties.

The current state policy for the workplace education program is to fund eligible, well-functioning model projects for several years with the idea that companies who experience the benefits of basic education for their workers will increasingly take on the costs of providing it themselves. In some cases unions may pay for the classses, or they may ensure that a company provides them by including provision for basic education in collective bargaining agreements. In this fiscal year, the five third-year projects are receiving 25% of their funding from their sponsoring companies, which was a requirement for refunding. In the next year, a larger "cash match" from the companies will be required, and thus public funding will gradually be reduced.

The interest in basic education for their workers on the part of different companies varies greatly. The financial stability and profit margins of companies vary also, and so the ability of some businesses to commit resources to education for their workers may be limited. When the state's third-year cash match policy goes into effect in some places, some good programs may go under because companies cannot afford to maintain them.

The job of project coordinator is a pivotal one, requiring creativity, organizational skills, educational expertise, diplomacy, and lots of energy. The coordinator is usually, though not necessarily, a learning-provider person. The present 16 project coordinators include one union rep, one SDA planner, and 14 learning-provider people. In a small project, the coordinator and the teacher are one and the same person.

The coordinator convenes the advisory board, negotiates with company and union to organize recruitment drives and class times and rooms, and arranges for teachers to spend time with workers on their jobs to find out what literacy, English or math skills they need. S/he meets with supervisors to get their input for the curriculum, their feedback and advice on the way the program is going, and, later in the year, to find out if there have been improvements in workers' job performance as a result of the classes. Using supervisor, union and worker input, the coordinator works with the teachers to develop a curriculum tailored to the specific workplace. S/he sets up workshops for teachers, sometimes in conjunction with other workplace education projects, to expand and share their newly developing workplace teaching expertise. The coordinator is also responsible for the paperwork. To sum up, the project coordinator, in conjunction with the advisory board, designs and defines the project, responding to the requests and needs of workers and company personnel. S/he is the main trouble-shooter as well.

Partnerships: Successes and Problems

The different viewpoints and areas of expertise of the members of the state steering committee — the educational resources of DOE, the employer and job training connections of DET, EOL's work with organized labor and workers' rights, the CLC's role as spokespersons and researchers of literacy issues — are a rich resource for the Workplace Education Program. However, at the operational level agency collaboration has been difficult because of the necessity to combine the forms and requirements of three different funding sources. An integrated system is gradually being worked out, but not without a certain amount of confusion, uncertainty and, at times, resentment among the partners at both the local and the state levels.

Partnerships at the local level have brought together different segments of the community. The result can be a creative working group whose ideas and efforts sometimes go beyond the original scope of the project. Local partnerships have raised additional money enabling projects to add student-produced books and more teachers. They have sponsored informational meetings on workplace education for area businesses and unions. One group recently applied for and received a grant from the Federal Department of Labor for an ABE component which will be added to their existing workplace ESL program.

Problems arise when one or more of the partners does not take an active role. Two projects failed because changes in personnel at their sponsoring companies brought in new plant managers who were not committed to workplace education. One union-coordinated project came close to failing because for much of the year the union was very involved in an organizing drive and a strike at another facility and had little time left for the project.

One group whose importance was not completely foreseen in initially designing the WEP is the company supervisors. They know the job tasks and the individual workers best. Involving supervisors in program start-up and ongoing planning turns out to be essential. Supervisors can provide invaluable help in recruitment, curriculum development and program and student evaluation. In some projects they work as language coaches and participate in cross-cultural workshops to learn more about their workers' countries of origin. If the supervisors are not supportive of a project, people working under them will not feel supported in attending classes and may not attend. To ensure their support supervisors should be given formal responsibilities in the designing and implementation of projects.

Curriculum

Workplace-specific curricula have been developed by all the projects. (Those available for distribution are listed in the Appendix.) The most successful respond to the educational, life and work needs of the workers. To write work-related lessons, teachers have to understand job tasks and job vocabulary. For lessons relating to union and company policies their manuals are used, and union and company personnel can make guest appearances to teach some of the lessons.

Workplace projects have produced photo stories, books of student writings, newsletters and videos. The film "Norma Rae" was viewed and discussed in one union-based ESL class. After these lessons, sometimes things change. One evening, a small all-male group of regular attenders at a union meeting were surprised and somewhat nonplussed at the entrance of a group of eight women from a workplace education class, also members, who had decided to become more active in the union. The men were so thrown off, in fact, that a verbal argument between two of them became physical. The ladies left, but they planned to return and discuss, for one thing, the way meetings were being run. In a different workplace, the teacher followed a supervisor's suggestion that she work on flow charts in the class. After completing a flow chart for his job, one worker cut out some unnecessary steps and shortened the time needed to do his job.

Peer tutoring, that is, workers helping others with math or English, takes place in a number of projects. In one ESL project a number of supervisors, workers and union officials volunteered to be trained as "language coaches." The trainer was Lorrie Verplaetse, a counselor at Southeastern Massachusetts University, who has specialized in workplace language coach training. Participants were "sensitized to the fears and frustrations of the immigrant worker; exposed to simplified language learning theory and methods; and organized into teams to encourage workers who want to speak English during everyday on-the-job communications." (Verplaetse, L., "English Encounters of the Third Kind," *Data Training*, April, 1988)

The Worker's Views

What do participating workers think of all this? A report was compiled by two researchers from the Stone Center at Wellesley College, based on interviews with thirty workers who participated in classes at four different projects in the WEP. (See Appendix.) Here are some of the responses of workplace students:

> "It was the best thing in life I ever did for myself," says a widowed 53 year-old French Canadian woman who has worked as a stitcher for 37 years and who received her GED through the program.
>
> A 47 year-old Black American man, who has worked at his company for 20 years, says that the class has given him confidence: "I feel better about myself in general, and feel the importance of education. Now I can learn."
>
> A 19 year-old Puerto Rican woman, who works as a ticketer in a clothing distribution center feels she has better relationships with her supervisor and co-workers. She says, "I am different now, I can ask for help."

When interviewers asked workers what were the effects and benefits of being in the class, they learned that "there were many ways that workers described how their personal and work lives have been changed . . . Most significant was the increase of self-esteem reported by workers of all ages. And second to that, workers mentioned feeling better about their present job situation." (*Commonwealth's Workplace Education Program: Worker Evaluation*, Rayman and Rosseel, p. 31)

While not a quality that can be measured by a paper and pencil test, positive self-esteem is, as we know, a key ingredient of successful learning and of personal growth and development. As one of the project coordinators said, "There is no place to show increased self-esteem on performance reports, but that doesn't mean it's not real. You can *see* it."

Another WEP result, similarly difficult to measure but reported by all projects, is the increase in the amount and the quality of communication among people in the workplace. When managers, union reps, supervisors, workers and teachers share responsibility for program planning, recruitment, curriculum development and trouble-shooting, they listen to and use each other's ideas more than they ordinarily do in the course of a normal workday. At a luncheon celebrating one project's two and a half years of successful operation, the company manager put it this way: "The culture of our workplace has changed," — and he meant for the better.

Broader Implications

"Adult literacy is a key to the country's economic future," and 1989 is "a time for action." (Chisman, Forrest P., *Jump Start: The Federal Role in Adult Literacy*, Southport Institute of Policy Analysis, Southport, CT, 1989) The theme is echoed in numerous recent articles and studies in business magazines, newspapers and education journals. The until-now almost unknown staff and students in adult basic education programs across the country are suddenly cast in the role of saving the country from economic disaster. What has changed?

Concerns about increased literacy and skills on the part of the worker seem to center around three issues:

1. High Technology: As industries like banking and insurance computerize their operations, a number of low-level clerical jobs are combined into a few "analyst"-type jobs requiring higher skills. In manufacturing, computerized machinery requires skills like blueprint reading and higher-than-basic math. Even some low-level jobs, such as stock clerk, now involve reading computer codes.

2. Global Competition: There are many cases of U.S. mass-produced goods losing out to cheaper or better-quality items produced in other countries. Some U.S. companies have either sold off their manufacturing operations or moved them to countries where labor is cheaper. Some of the companies which have kept their operations in the U.S. are experimenting with more custom-made rather than mass-produced products and with different models of organization in which workers play a greater role in planning and quality control. (Some of the latter are genuinely participatory, while others are not.) Making custom-made products (often using technologically upgraded machinery) requires more operational skill. Participation in planning requires good analytic and communication skills.

3. Demographics: A very different type of workforce change, but one that is possibly even more far-reaching than the other two, at least in the near future, is the result of a decrease in the U.S. birth rate since the era of the baby boom. Employers used to have a larger pool of workers to choose from to fill their entry-level positions. Now they can no longer pass over minorities, women and older applicants. A look at custodial workers, fast food cashiers and nurse's assistants in the Boston area would turn up few young white men and, for that matter, few native English speakers. This phenomenon is an immediate concern for employers with a mostly entry-level workforce, especially in workplaces like nursing homes where clear communi-

cation is critical. (The Southport Institute study expresses even more concern about the year 2010 when the baby boomers reach retirement age!)

There is no doubt that there have been major, still escalatory changes in the economy and in the workforce. A recent book by two economists takes a look at the changes from the point of view of workers and their families. In *The Great U-Turn*, Bennett Harrison and Barry Bluestone critically examine the directions that business and government have taken in the last ten years and what the effects have been on workers. "The story is one of a series of changes in direction — reversals in course, great U-turns, if you will — in the strategic policies of both business and government, and, as a consequence, a great U-turn in our material well-being... The standard of living of American workers — and a growing number of their families — is in serious trouble." (Harrison, B. and Bluestone, B. *The Great U-Turn: Corporate Restructuring and the Polarizing of America*, Basic Books, Inc. New York, NY, 1988, p. 3)

The U-turns are these:

1. While some U.S. companies are working to "improve product quality and productivity by investment and innovation," the majority are attempting to "make U.S. products cheaper rather than better." (Harrison and Bluestone, p. 12). To cut the costs of labor, they are forcing unionized workers to take wage and benefit concessions, subcontracting work out to firms whose non-unionized workers work on a part-time, temporary basis, moving manufacturing plants to countries where labor is cheaper, buying parts from firms in other countries, thus forcing U.S. plants to close, and hiring new workers to do the same jobs as senior workers but at lower salaries. Subcontracting out enables corporate managers to avoid union demands, and removes the companies' internal career ladders. In addition, part-time, temporary "contingent" work is not what many workers choose, but rather are forced to take because of the proliferation of these practices. The Reagan government contributed to the trend away from the protection of the workers "with the disbanding of the air traffic controllers' union and the appointment of conservative members to the National Labor Relations Board." (Harrison and Bluestone, p. 15)

2. In addition to the "U-turn in the prevailing relationship between business and its workforce," a large number of American businesses have undertaken a second type of restructuring — a "turn toward financial speculation and away from productive investment ...Such shifts in investment not only affect capital markets, but are partially responsible for the great U-turn we are witnessing in the labor market today. Jobs in the financial capitals of America tend to be highly polarized. The financial sector, as well as the other service activities which surround it, is structured very differently than manufacturing. It tends to be staffed by well-paid, white collar professional and technical workers at one end, and poorly paid semi- and unskilled workers at the other. The general rule, with few exceptions, is: men at the top, women at the bottom; whites at the center, workers of color and immigrants at the margin." (Harrison and Bluestone, pp. 54-56)

They also state, "According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, between 1984 and 1995, the ten occupations that will require the largest number of new workers (in order) are:

*cashier
*registered nurse
*janitor
*truck driver
*waiter and waitress
*wholesale trade salesworker
*nurse's aide and orderly
*retail salesperson
*accountant and auditor
*kindergarten and elementary school teacher

Workers in six of the ten categories earned well below the average weekly wage of $344 in 1984, while the second, sixth and ninth earned well above it." (Harrison and Bluestone, pp. 70-71)

Harrison and Bluestone clearly demonstrate that even though the number of jobs has increased dramatically in the last ten years, the majority of the new jobs, as stated above, provide neither adequate salaries nor good future prospects. Other fragile underpinnings of the "economic recovery" are increased military spending coupled with national debt, as well as the large corporate debts incurred in financial ventures such as mergers and acquisitions. The solid foundations — the integration of innovative techniques and new technology into production, new capital investment, a well-trained workforce, opportunities for people to earn a good living and to move ahead, a well-maintained physical infrastructure (highways, bridges, railways) — are largely missing. Among their recommendations for addressing these issues are "more attention to technical and lifelong (recurrent) education" with the following stipulation: "If we are going to produce a more educated workforce, then we had better be sure that jobs are being created (or upgraded) so as to fully utilize and reward the skill and ability of that workforce. One policy without the other simply will not do. We need both re-planned education *and* better-planned job creation. (Harrison and Bluestone, p. 18)

I think that it is important to make sure that current emphasis on increased literacy as a critical component in solving the country's economic ills does not become a way of passing the buck from the policies of corporations and government to the people whose low literacy skills are due at least in part to those very policies. It is essential to keep the whole picture clearly in mind and to advocate for responsible and informed policies for both education *and* work.

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Appendix

These materials have been written by different projects in the Massachusetts Workplace Education Program. They will be available in the A.L.R.I. library.

1. Easco Hand Tools, Springfield, MA: *Common Hand Tools*, developed at the Mass. Career Development Institute by Jonas Barrientos.
2. New Bedford Industries and Unions, New Bedford, MA: a) *Working Curriculum: Workplace ESL/Literacy*, and b) *Workplace ESL Pre/Post Test*, developed by Lenore Balliro at the Labor Education Center, Southeastern Mass. University, North Dartmouth, MA.
3. Nursing Homes Workplace Project: *A Manual for Setting up ESL Programs in Nursing Homes*, developed by Nancy Centrella, Continuing Education Institute, Needham, MA.
4. TJ Maxx Distribution Center, Worcester, MA: *Workplace ESL: Some Personal Thoughts and Memories Shared by Students*, developed by Project Coordinator Kathy Rentsch and the teachers and students in the project, Quinsigamond Community College Center for Lifelong Learning, Worcester, MA.
5. United Electric Controls, Watertown, MA: *Workplace Literacy Project Summary* (includes ESL placement test, curriculum, lesson plans, class album), developed by Jim Ward and Deb Sterling, Middlesex County Employment and Training Program, Somerville, MA.
6. UMass/Amherst: *Labor/Management Workplace Education Program: A Blueprint for a Model Employer-Union Partnership in Workplace Education*, developed by project coordinator Joe Connolly and teachers and learners in the workplace education project sponsored by the Staff Training and Development Unit, Division of Human Resources, UMass/Amherst, with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

Judy Hikes began teaching English in the Peace Corps in Nigeria. She has continued to teach English in adult education programs here and, in addition, has taught beginning and intermediate-level reading, GED and math. She has also worked as an adult education counselor. Her current job is as coordinator of the state-sponsored Massachusetts Workplace Education Program.

Use of the Language Experience Approach with Non-English Speaking Refugees and Immigrants

by Anthony D'Annunzio and Paige E. Payne

The major objective of an adult basic education proposal recently funded in Pennsylvania is to determine the feasibility of using pedagogically unsophisticated Southeast Asians who are literate in their native Cambodian language and in English as instructors to teach both speaking and reading in English.

Although significant numbers of such potential tutors are extant in our urban areas, their lack of educational background has generally precluded their use in instructional settings. They represent a substantial resource of untapped instructional potential. Instructional formats are already in place that would permit their use as tutors after a short in-service period. These formats include the language experience approach (LEA) and individualized reading. These have been used in American schools as methods of reading acquisition for many years (Spache, 1981). The effectiveness of using LEA either in English as a second language (ESL) programs or as a method of teaching reading with non-literate American adults has been documented (Deem & Marshall, 1980; Ranard & Haverson, 1981; Ben-Barka, 1982; Dixon & Nessel; Moustaffa, 1985).

Our program here at Drexel is innovative in that it includes a determination of the feasibility of combining ESL and beginning reading instruction with the use of literate bilingual tutors who have had little professional educational exposure.

The Process

As a student relates a story in the Cambodian language (Khmer) to the tutor the latter immediately transcribes it into English. The tutors now follow standard LEA procedures (Stauffer, 1980, p. 39-40). The tutor pronounces each word as it is written; reads the entire selection to the student, pointing to each word, proceeding from left to right; and paces the students as they read the story from left to right along with the tutor. This student-narrated story is re-read over three successive class sessions. By this stratagem, it is hoped that the students will begin to speak and read in English simultaneously, based upon their own dictations from their native language.

After individually dictating a story each student returns to his or her seat with the story and rereads it silently. As they read, they underline with a single line each word they know. This is a positive approach to word recognition since the emphasis is on what is known. Once all group members have dictated a story, they all reassemble and, one by one, they read their stories, which have been clipped onto an easel, aloud to the group while pointing to each word. Since the words are of the students' choosing, there is greater likelihood that they will recognize and remember the words in their recorded accounts.

Underlined words that are recognized two or three days after dictation are put on 3x5 cards and are placed into the students' "word-banks." Students with at least thirty words they can recognize at sight are introduced to activities which foster such word recognition skills as:

- focusing attention on beginning sounds
- noticing how beginnings sounds are alike and different
- identifying the letters that represent a beginning sound
- avoiding confusing letter names with the sounds they represent
- learning to recognize sounds and letters in context rather than in isolation
- filing words in the word banks (Stauffer, 1980, p. 123).

Other word bank activities that have been used include closure activities, alphabetizing, conceptual categorization, finding compound words and so forth. As the students are introduced to the different word bank activities, it is exciting to note the natural camaraderie that develops among them. Without suggestion from the tutor or reading specialist, the more proficient students will assist their classmates with their word bank activities. This process is a learning experience for all students involved. New words are seen and experienced, and, importantly, this is a step toward future learning independence.

All during these procedures, the tutors are continuously monitored by a reading specialist and are provided with demonstrations and feedback. In this way, tutors continue to increase their repertoire of LEA skills.

Although the immigrant and refugee Cambodians evidenced virtually no English speaking ability at the beginning of the project, many are reading their transcribed stories fluently in English after only six to seven weeks of exposure to the LEA procedures. Indeed, roughly twenty-five percent of the students are beginning to give some of their dictations to the tutors in English. A small number have begun to write their own stories in English, with occasional assistance from the tutors or the reading specialist. The rapidity with which they are acquiring competence in speaking, reading, and even writing in English is even more astonishing when consideration is given to the fact that the majority of them are illiterate in their native language, having had virtually no formal education.

Although none of the students have yet to reach this milestone, it is apparent that some soon will be ready for an introduction to individualized reading. This non-directive procedure is based upon three major principles, self-seeking, self-selection and self-pacing (Spache, 1986, p. 90).

> According to this philosophy, the child, motivated by internalness (seeking), will attempt to read those materials suited to his needs and interests (self-selection) and will progress in level and skills as his growth patterns and readiness for new learning permits (self-pacing).

A prerequisite for this format is access to a library. Fortunately, the Philadelphia Free Library system is close at hand to the two centers in which the programs are housed. As various individuals approach this reading milestone, they will be taken to the library to become members. After books are selected and read, the tutors will be shown how to conduct an individual conference. The heart of this approach is as follows:

1. The student chooses a passage from a book he or she has read and orally reads it to the tutor.
2. The tutor observes the students' reading errors and other behaviors and checks comprehension through the use of improvised or prepared questions.
3. The tutor makes plans with the student for future small-group work on the skills that appear to be weak and gives workbook assignments and suggestions for follow-up activities.

Since the students who engage in individualized reading will no longer need to give LEA dictations, they will continue their storytelling through another mode, expressive writing (Hansen, 1988). There will be an opportunity for expressive writing during each instructional session. The basic assumption undergirding the use of this approach is that the most efficient way of developing written expression is quite simply to write — the more, the better (Parry and Hansen, 1988).

The point of this endeavor is to encourage the flow of written expression so that the students will naturally acquire syntactical facility and will attempt to use increasingly more sophisticated constructions, provided that they receive continuous feedback in the form of developmentally appropriate mini-lessons. At some point during the natural development of syntactical facility, for example, an individual may attempt to use quotation marks. The student either asks how to use quotations appropriately or attempts to use them in his written expression, however inappropriately. The student has expressed a need and a mini-lesson on the use of quotations for this particular student is in order. Through demonstrations by the reading specialist, the tutors will make only those corrections on the completed stories that are compatible with each student's level of competence. The student then reads the story out loud to the tutor, who takes the opportunity to provide a developmentally appropriate mini-lesson.

Further Rationale for this Approach

The use of bilingual tutors serves other essential functions aside from translation. Since the tutors share the same background with the students, this may assure an accepting, non-intimidating atmosphere and may increase the desire of the refugees and immigrants to remain in the program. The pedagogical and motivational advantages of personal involvement have been demonstrated previously (Boyd & Martin, 1984; Clabby & Betz, 1985; Johnson, 1985; Miller, et al, 1985).

The bilingual tutors and the instructional groups, using the LEA and individualized reading, are involved in highly personal encounters. As an aspect of their training, the tutors will be introduced to the use of the Rogerian non-directive counseling approach during their daily in-service schedule. LEA and individualized reading are, in themselves, non-directive learning procedures. The tutors and the target groups are highly interactive. The learning situation is personalized. Literacy programs world-wide commonly acknowledge the critical need for counseling (Nickse, 1987).

The use of LEA, individualized reading and non-directive counseling allows refugee and immigrant populations to take much greater initiative in the literacy process. As the program develops, a significant number of tutors can readily be trained by veteran tutors, continually augmenting the instructional pool so that even typically inaccessible refugee populations can receive instructional exposure. By this strategy, these populations may be more readily recruited and retained without continual reliance upon federal, state and urban intervention programs.

There is a body of literature putting forth the notion that adults as well as children learn best when instruction is related to personal experiences (Boyd

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& Martin, 1984; Clabby & Belz, 1985; Johnson, 1985; Miller et al, 1985). This developmental perspective also holds that adults should select the content, degree and direction of their learning. The students are given this initiative through self-selection and self-pacing. What is advocated here is a dynamic pedagogy that has the quality of personal involvement. As Rogers has stated:

> . . . Even when the impetus or stimulus comes from outside, the sense of discovery, of reaching out, of grasping and comprehending comes from within (Rogers, 1983, p. 5).

As of this writing, the program has been in operation for less than three months. There are three classes of twelve to fifteen Cambodians. The tutors are developing a close working relationship with them. Each encounter is highly personalized. Student productions inevitably reveal their experiences and aspirations. Each dictation becomes, in a sense, a non-directive counseling opportunity. Student turnover has remained quite low. The groups have nearly doubled in size as students have recommended the program to their friends. Since LEA is a highly individualized format, new students can be brought into a group at any time. Whenever possible, students who are about to leave the program, for whatever reasons, will be post-tested to determine progress.

The encounters among the students are ones of helpful camaraderie, with veteran students frequently assisting the newer arrivals. It is apparent that these refugees and immigrants are making rapid strides in learning to speak and read in English. It remains to be seen, using objective evaluation instruments, what progress will be attained in the coming months.

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Pioneering Effective Educational Services for Dyslexic Illiterate Adults

by Carolyn Buell Kidder

In October of 1987, the First National Congress on Adults with Special Learning Needs was held in Washington, D.C., under the joint sponsorship of the U.S. Department of Education's Division of Adult Education and Gallaudet University for the Deaf. This Congress issued a "Declaration," whose opening paragraphs are the following:

> To enrich the humanity of us all, there should be more sharing of the unique perspectives, understandings and values developed by many adults with special learning needs.
>
> In our deliberations, we have included among such adults those persons with physical, sensory, mental, emotional or learning disabilities. We recognize that more precise data is needed on their number and characteristics. We affirm unequivocally, however, that we know enough now to begin. . . .
>
> We must "will the means," as individuals, and throughout educational, social and governmental institutions. Each of us has a responsibility to rigorously re-examine our own thinking, feelings, priorities and practices, to decide how we can work together to achieve those goals.

As a teacher of dyslexic illiterate adults, I have been deeply concerned by the lack of awareness by the media and by adult literacy programs that undiagnosed dyslexia is a significant cause of adult illiteracy. Therefore, I was greatly heartened to find neurologically-based learning disabilities—of which dyslexia is a major example—included in the Declaration's categories of adult special learning needs. I was further heartened when, in August of 1988, I attended the National Conference on Adults with Special Learning Needs in Washington, D.C. This conference, like the 1987 National Congress, was co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of Educations' Adult Education Division and Gallaudet University. It was held in response to the 1987 National Congress' urgent call for continued and expanded dialogue, networking and dissemination of information on model programs, instructional techniques and materials, inter-agency coordination, legislative issues, etc., related to adults with visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical immobility, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, speech and language impairment and learning disabilities. Fully 15 of the conference workshops (20% of the total 77 workshops offered) were devoted specifically to programs and techniques for meeting the educational and vocational needs of adults with learning disabilities. Of these 15 workshops, 8 addressed the need for identification of LD adults enrolled in literacy programs and subsequent implementation of specialized remedial approaches to help LD adults improve their basic reading/writing skills.

Some Current Programs

One such workshop, entitled "Maryland's Nationally Recognized Welfare-to-Work Program," discussed the issue that "states have not. . . adequately accounted for the significant effect of learning disabilities as the cause of many remediation needs. Maryland's nationally recognized program estimates that upwards of 30% of its clients who need remedial education have learning disabilities and/or learning problems." Several pioneering programs which both acknowledge the existence of learning disabled adults in their adult basic education/literacy student populations and provide specialized services to meet the remedial needs of those adults were represented at the conference. These included the Project Read program at the Learning Connection in Pittsfield, MA, where the *Reading from Scratch* structured phonics reading program is used with identified dyslexic students. Another outstanding new model program represented was the Pittsburgh Literacy Initiative (PLI). In cooperation with the national literacy media campaign PLUS (Project Literacy — U.S.), the Pittsburgh Literacy Initiative has designed a program in which adult students are screened for learning disabilities and then offered specialized instructional services. The following description of the program appeared in the February, 1988 edition of *What's the Buzz?*, Pennsylvania's Adult Basic Education (ABE) dissemination newsletter:

> As part of the overall screening and referral of PLI, adults are tested on word recognition and

> oral reading skills. Three brief, open-ended questions provide the PLI staff with information on written language ability and help indicate problems with dyslexia.
>
> Analysis of reading style, the writing sample, and previous education help to identify individuals with special learning needs. These individuals are given additional tests, and if necessary, referred to literacy service providers that are equipped to teach students with special needs.
>
> PLI also runs a special class for learning disabled adults in conjunction with the Community College of Allegheny County. This class addresses the unique needs of the learning disabled adult and combines group instruction in specific skills, one-on-one tutoring and computer-assisted instruction.[1]

The special class for LD adults referred to above runs for 30 hours; upon completion of the course, a student can elect either to be "mainstreamed" into a regular basic education class or to repeat the special class.

Another approach to meeting the specialized educational needs of LD adults was presented at a workshop entitled: "Training Teachers for Helping LD Adults." The presenters included the ABE coordinators of the Rochester, NY public schools and of the Community College of the Finger Lakes, Canadaigua, NY. They explained the development and goals of their outstanding staff development program which has trained over 300 adult educators throughout New York State in the identification, diagnosis and instruction of adults with learning disabilities as well as in the provision of support services through interagency cooperation. The program trained 30 master teachers who then provided in-service training to the 300 adult educators. Each educator participating in the training received a packet of materials to assist in screening and instructing adult students with learning disabilities and to assist in developing local networks with outside agencies and resources to supplement the LD instructional programs.

It was indeed encouraging to learn at the National Conference that innovative pilot programs such as Project Read, the Pittsburgh Literacy Initiative and the New York State teacher training program do exist to meet the needs of LD adults, even though they are still extremely rare. I was also encouraged to find at least three representatives from the dyslexia professional community besides myself making presentations. I have become deeply concerned at the lack of outreach on the part of the dyslexia professional community to the huge numbers of undiagnosed dyslexic illiterate poor, which I have estimated is probably as high as 7-10 million nationally[2], so I was particularly pleased to find that one general session on the conference agenda included a speaker from the National Institute of Dyslexia and that another general session had as a panelist a representative of the Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities (ACLD). Also, the Landmark School, a private school for dyslexic children on the North Shore of Boston, presented a workshop on its new Adult Learning Disabilities Program, which offers a thorough evaluation followed by a combination of one-to-one tutorials and small group classes for adult students whose needs range from literacy skill training to development of more advanced reading/writing skills needed in college and vocational training programs and in the workforce. The only drawback to this program is that it is not free: a 15-week tutorial with evaluations costs $500-$1000. These tuition charges severely limit the accessibility of this program to the poor.

Another program for dyslexic adults sponsored by a private school for dyslexic children, which combines excellent services and unaffordability for the poor, is the recently opened evening program of the Assets School in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Begun in the fall of 1985, this program is designed exclusively for the adult with the dyslexic profile of average to above average intelligence and serious deficiency in decoding and spelling words and in written expression. The small classes meet two evenings a week for three hours each evening over a ten-week period, and the program continues in ten-week modules throughout the year. Three phonics methods — Orton-Gillingham, Spalding, and Slingerland — are employed; all three are long-established methods for teaching decoding to dyslexics. The program reports gains in reading skill as high as three years in one ten-week, 60-hour module, and regrets that the tuition charge of $250 per module keeps it from being accessible to many who need their services. As the program director states, "The difficulty is that if you can't read or write, you won't find a high-paying job and can't pay the tuition."[3]

Solving the Problems of Cost

In my own presentation as a panelist at a general session on building effective literacy programs, I referred to the Asset School program's services and tuition charges as an example of what is good and bad in the design of most of the handful of programs developed from within the dyslexic professional community over the last ten to fifteen years for its noncollegiate adult service population. In a real sense, programs using specialized methods in which adult dyslexics make measurable, significant gains in skill are meaningless if they are inaccessible due to cost. I emphasized the absolute practical and moral obligation of programs set up by the dyslexia professional community to remove the tuition barrier without sacrificing quality. Strategies to accomplish this can include aggressively soliciting donations from foundations to substitute for the funds obtained by charging tuition.

An alternative strategy would be aggressively raising money for scholarships and assisting students in obtaining third party funding for tuition costs from their state's Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. Since 1981, adults whose reading difficulties are due to dyslexia have been eligible for the services of Vocational Rehabilitation on the grounds that they have a medical, neurologically-based disability. In the past five years, I have had eight low-income adult dyslexic clients in my private tutorial practice who each received funding for 100-250 hours of remedial tutorial with me from the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC). Five of these clients progressed at a rate of one grade level improvement in word recognition skill for each 30-45 hours of Orton-Gillingham based one-on-one instruction; three who were severely dyslexic required 60-70 hours per grade level. Two other low-income dyslexic adult clients received MRC funding for extensive academic support tutorial with me to assist them in completing assignments for the college courses in which they were enrolled. MRC also paid for formal diagnostic evaluation of each client by a neurologist and/or psychologist if the client had no Medicaid or other medical insurance. In each case, the tutorials were funded by MRC as part of the client's IWRP (Individual Written Rehabilitation Plan). The client's reading difficulties stemming from his or her medical disability of dyslexia had been identified as a barrier to employment or vocational training commensurate with the client's talents in other areas, a barrier which the client and the client's Vocational Rehabilitation counselor had agreed was most appropriately dealt with by removing it through remediation rather than trying to work around it in vocational placement.

Besides obtaining grants, donations, scholarships and Vocational Rehabilitational funding, there are other creative ways of offering specialized reading remediation to low-income dyslexic adults without charge to them. In my panel presentation at the National Conference, I described an exciting new program in the Great Neck/Huntington, NY area, which provides volunteer tutors with careful training in the Orton-Gillingham phonics method, followed by frequent, ongoing supervision. This program is Project Literacy/Outreach; since September of 1986 it has trained over 30 volunteer tutors. All learners in the program are dyslexic; the adults in the program range in age from 25-59 (the program also accepts dyslexic children whose parents cannot afford private remediation). Lucille Cutler, the Project Coordinator, describes the development and rationale for the program as follows:

> When this project started, we had no idea what would happen. Nobody had ever thought of training volunteers to deliver a very special kind of remediation. We knew that not everybody learned the same way. . .We knew there were people who never learned to read because of a special learning disability (sometimes called dyslexia). Some of these people had been evaluated. Others didn't know the reason for their difficulty. Dyslexia is very democratic, affecting rich and poor alike. Nelson Rockefeller, a dyslexic, would have had no trouble getting appropriate educational help. But we knew there were people without the means. That's why we started Project Literacy.
>
> This program could never have happened without the cooperation of many people. To start with, we had to have a trainer. Shirli Kohn, the director of the Intersensory Learning & Diagnostic Center, agreed to do the training. She comes well-prepared. As the moving force of the ILDC, she has facilitated the educational development of hundreds of individuals from children to adults. Her sensitive, professional understanding, coupled with years of experience and professional training, have established her reputation as an educational consultant and expert.
>
> Now we have a track record. And we feel good all over. At our frequent rap sessions, tutor volunteers bubble with excitement and enthusiasm about what their particular student has mastered. If there are any questions or problems, Shirli Kohn, our trainer, is there to give suggestions.[4]

At the end of the program's first year, their "track record" was that "every learner now working in the program shows measurable progress and increased self-esteem."[5] Two accounts by Project Literacy/Outreach tutors provide anecdotal evidence of their adult students' progress and commitment to a program which is meeting their specialized reading needs as dyslexics.

The first account is about "Sam":

Each week Sam arrives early for our session and waits in silent anticipation. He's a man in his late forties who has spent may courageous years trying to read. "They told me I was unteachable," Sam confided. Before we met, he had tried private tutors. Always failure. A doctor who evaluated his problem labeled him hopeless. Sam is severely dyslexic.

We've been meeting on a regular basis since January (of 1988). Initially, Sam could identify only a few of the letter sounds and could read a few one-syllable words inconsistently. Progress has been gradual but significant. He now is able to identify all the phonograms. Vocabulary incorporating short vowel sounds is increasing. He's now reading simple books.

When you ask Sam how he feels about reading, he says with a slight twinkle in his eye and a smile, "I don't know how I'm doing it, but I'm getting it." The more he accomplishes, the more his self-confidence grows.[6]

The second account is about "Dennis":

> My student is 32. Bright. He's very motivated and never misses a session, even though he comes by bus. He has no car, but he drives a truck at work. . . .One rainy, windy evening my student kept me waiting, which was most unusual. When he arrived, he apologized for being late. He explained he had made a long delivery run for his employer. He had left at 3 a.m. to drive to Buffalo (over 500 miles away) to drop off lumber. He had unloaded the truck and driven right back because he didn't want to miss his reading night. I knew how tired and hungry he must have felt, and I asked why he didn't call me. I told him we could have cancelled the lesson for that night. He answered, "I'm never too tired for a lesson. It's too important to miss."[7]

Another setting to which I referred in my panel presentation where Orton Gillingham instruction is provided free of charge to adult dyslexics is at Dorcas Place in Providence, Rhode Island. This is a community-based literacy center, privately funded by a wide range of sources. The following is an account of the prior suffering and current success of "Betty," a dyslexic adult student at the center:

> After years of shame and frustration, Betty finally can now affirm something she secretly suspected — she really isn't stupid. For a woman whose reading disability prevented her from achieving better than a third-grade reading level, her feelings are difficult to discuss.
>
> She found it impossible to explain the discrepancy between intelligence and performance to people who laughed at her attempt to read a newspaper or to write a note to her child's teacher. It was heartbreaking to comfort a child embarrassed by his mother's inability to help him with homework.
>
> Betty spent years trying to find help to overcome her handicap. Finally, with the combined emotion of courage and desperation, she enrolled at Dorcas Place Literacy Center in Providence, Rhode Island.
>
> After one year of instruction based on the Orton-Gillingham Method, Betty's reading level increased by 2 1/2 years. So did her self-esteem, sense of fulfillment and determination to achieve what used to be only a dream.
>
> Now at the age of 47, Betty has begun her second year at Dorcas Place, and for the first time in her life she dares to believe that "even if I'm 60, I will one day be able to enter college."[8]

Making Dyslexia a Priority

With all the focus on the specialized needs of adults with learning disabilities at the 1988 National Conference, it might have been easy to have left Washington with a rosy, reassuring feeling that learning disabilities are "taken for granted" as a cause of adult reading programs across the U.S., and that the programs featured at the conference are representative of services routinely available to meet the needs of LD adults in every community.

However, the sad reality is that the programs showcased at the conference are refreshing but rare cases of innovation and hope in a vast wasteland of ignorance and neglect regarding the specialized needs of the adult dyslexic poor. Both the dyslexic professional community and the adult literacy professional community on a national scale must follow the lead of these pioneering model programs, and make radical modifications in their current service delivery theories and practices. They must heed the call of the 1987 Declaration of the First National Congress to "rigorously examine our own thinking, feelings, priorities and practices," so that *all* adults who seek to transform their lives by becoming literate will receive the type of instruction they need to achieve their goal, including 7-10 million currently undiagnosed dyslexic illiterate poor.

In accomplishing this, adult literacy personnel must become more fully aware and accepting of the reality that poverty and poor schooling are not the only causes of reading difficulty. The idea that learning difficulties can stem from deficits in a person's own neurological "word-processing" mechanisms sometimes is met with hostility by adult educators who see learning disabilities as just one more insidious attempt to "blame the victim" for his or her impoverishment and previous school difficulties.

However, adult educators who insist that poverty and poor schooling are the only causes of reading problems must be confronted with the reality that 10-15% of all children who are born into middle and upperclass circumstances and attend "good" schools still experience mild to severe difficulty in learning to read in spite of their intact intelligence and considerable environmental advantages. Their dyslexia, or genetically-produced, neurologically-based difficulty in word recognition, is not a condition that afflicts only the affluent; it is categorically untrue that "the rich are dyslexic and the poor are illiterate." Dyslexia occurs in all racial groups, all ethnic groups and all socioeconomic groups, and therefore 10-15% of all children born into poverty would have difficulty learning to read even if they had been transplanted into the most affluent circumstances at birth, because the *primary* cause of their reading difficulty is genetically-based neurological impairment.

Because of the incidence of dyslexia in the general population[9], an adult literacy center can expect that a minimum of 10-15% of its students are dyslexic. In all likelihood, however, the percentage of dyslexic students will be significantly greater, as high as 30% or even 50%, according to one estimate[10], since the student population of an adult remedial reading program is not a random, general population, but is already a population of poor readers.

If the dyslexics in such programs are not identified and taught with phonics-based alternatives to "language experience" and other sight word methods, they will "fail to thrive" in the programs, just as persons with a hidden lactose allergy would "fail to thrive" in a conventional nutrition program incorporating dairy products. For a dyslexic, it matters not that the educational "food" (printed words) meets the biochemical requirements of the *average* person's metabolism, is well-prepared, attractively served in ample portions, varied, yet chosen with sensitivity to the cultural preferences of the "diners," perhaps with the menus planned and the food cooked by the students themselves. Just as persons with lactose allergies are unable to benefit nutritionally from diets containing dairy products, so dyslexics cannot benefit educationally from reading programs employing sight word methodology; they cannot neurologically "digest" words as wholes, and must be provided with specialized techniques for breaking up words phonetically in order to advance in reading skill.

I feel it is totally unacceptable, a serious breach of professional service delivery and ethics, for an adult literacy center to neglect to screen and treat the dyslexics among its students, either out of ignorance or because their problem does not fit a preconceived sociopolitical explanation of illiteracy — but such neglect is unfortunately the norm nationally. In terms of awareness of the reality of dyslexia and other learning disabilities, most adult learning programs are at least ten years behind the public schools, which were mandated by federal legislation (P.L. 94-142) in the mid-'70s to provide appropriate evaluation and services to meet the unique educational needs of all children with disabilities, including the learning disabled. The quality of special needs programs implemented in response to the law varies widely, but the need for such programs has been recognized by public school systems nationwide for a decade. Hopefully, adult literacy programs can improve on the quality of remedial programs for dyslexics offered in the public schools once they catch up to the public schools in terms of recognition of the need for such programs.

Making Adults a Priority

The enormous number of poor dyslexic adults have been seriously neglected by the dyslexia professional community as well as the adult literacy professional community. Since dyslexia was first identified as an organic, medical condition fifty years ago, the vast majority of dyslexic persons who have received the benefit of specialized diagnostic and remedial services have been children and adolescents from the middle and upper classes. I believe this is because the true nature of their reading difficulty could not be attributed to a culturally deprived environment, and because affluent children have parents with the education, money and time necessary to search out, advocate and pay for specialized services. Without the aid of parental advocates and without being able to read well independently, the chances of an illiterate, impoverished dyslexic adult discovering what his or her problem is, seeking out resources and being able to afford them are extremely slim. This is especially true for dyslexic adults 30 years and older, who were out of school before the advent of the federally mandated special education services in the mid-'70's.

I feel that the dyslexia professional community needs to remind itself that 10-15% of *all* persons are dyslexic, not just 10-15% of the rich and the children. Just because poor, illiterate adults do not approach the dyslexia professional community for help does not mean that they are not dyslexic; it just means that they do not know they are dyslexic. I believe that it is the obligation of those organizations and institutions which are dedicated to serving dyslexics to actively champion the 7-10 million undiagnosed dyslexic illiterate adults in this country. They should disseminate information on dyslexia as a hidden cause of adults' reading problems through the *non-print* media. They should also take the initiative in offering the full range of their diagnostic and teaching resources to adult literacy centers and to the unidentified dyslexics in the student populations of such centers. As noted earlier, any programs for adult dyslexics developed by the dyslexia professional community must be made financially accessible to the poor by either not having tuition charges or by meeting tuition costs with scholarship aid or vocational rehabilitation funding.

New Approaches

In providing appropriate services to poor illiterate dyslexic adults, not only their need for specialized instructional methods and their need for no-cost programs must be considered. Both the dyslexia professional community and the adult literacy professional community must also consider the huge scope of services needed in terms of the sheer numbers of poor adult dyslexics. Large-scale service delivery systems are needed which can meet the needs of 7-10 million illiterate dyslexic adults in a few years, not a few decades. While the pilot programs featured at the 1988 National Conference on Adults with Special Learning Needs provided innovative role models for widespread replication, I believe that even more radical forms of "leveraging" effective methods and techniques than program replication are needed to meet the full scope of the adult dyslexia illiteracy crisis. These would involve maximizing the educational potential of interactive video, videotape and computer technology, both hardware and software, to bring specialized instruction to large numbers of adult dyslexics.

For example, speech synthesizers are now readily available and relatively inexpensive accessories for personal computers. Therefore, it is now meaningful to consider teaching phonics with computers because computers are now able to provide the auditory as well as the visual dimension of the symbol-to-sound drill which is the core of successful phonics teaching. Software versions of phonics instructional programs which have proven successful with dyslexics, such as Orton-Gillingham or Bloomfield, must be written for use with speech synthesizers and then widely distributed among adult literacy programs, many of whom already have personal computers in their facilities. In a setting where students were utilizing such software, teachers would be available to answer questions they would have about the content, but the student-teacher ratio could be significantly higher than in a small class direct-teaching setting.

An innovative alternative to synthetic speech output is the technology recently developed by two Bostonians, John Adams and Joseph Forest, which allows exact synchronization of taped human speech output with visual text on the screen of a special "dedicated" computer. Mr. Adams, himself a dyslexic, has prepared an adult literacy program based on the Orton-Gillingham phonics method for use with this system. Called LPI, it is currently being utilized in several Boston area adult education programs, including a local prison.

Another approach which efficiently leverages effective methodology and the expertise of master teachers "in action" is the series of 350 one-hour video tapes of instructional sessions for dyslexic students, which were produced at the Texas Scottish Rite Hospital Dyslexia Program in Dallas, to accompany their highly structured phonics workbook program entitled *Dyslexia Training Program.* Though this series was not specifically designed for use with adults, the video tape approach could be replicated with a curriculum and a "tone" specifically for adults.

In addition to video and computer software with voice output, the compensatory and teaching potential of computer hardware devices such as the Kurzweil Reading Machine (originally developed for the blind) must be fully explored for use with sighted "word-blind" adult dyslexics. In my 1978-79 field trial of the Kurzweil Reading Machine with adolescent dyslexic students in the Weymouth Public Schools, I was fully satisfied with the device's effectiveness as a compensatory aid in reading most printed hand-held materials. I also felt that it had significant potential as a teaching tool through the technique of visually tracking the machine's voice in a copy of the text being read on the machine.

Conclusion

In closing, I will repeat the challenge of the Declaration of the 1987 National Congress on Adults with Special Learning Needs: "Each of us has a responsibility to rigorously re-examine our own thinking, feelings, priorities and practices, to decide how we can work together to achieve these goals." The adult literacy professional community and the dyslexia professional community must engage in creative collaborations to provide solutions which will address the specialized learning needs and the financial constraints of illiterate adult dyslexics, as well as their huge numbers.

The intense economic and psychological suffering of these 7-10 million poor dyslexic adults is not just unfortunate, it is intolerable, because it is, to a large degree, unnecessary. Effective methodologies for teaching dyslexics are already well-established. The adult literacy professional community must recognize the critical importance of identifying adult dyslexics among their students and providing specialized phonics-based methodologies for them. The dyslexia professional community must develop creative ways of disseminating these methodologies, at no cost to the students, which will meet the full scope of the need in terms of numbers. We must "will the means" for providing effective large-scale literacy instruction for poor dyslexic adults, so that their liberation from the illiteracy which currently enslaves 7-10 million of them can begin.

Footnotes

1 "Identification of LD Adults," Pennsylvania's Adult Basic Education Dissemination Newsletter *What's the Buzz?* 7:6 (Troy, NY: February 1988), p. 4.

2 Carolyn Buell Kidder, "Dyslexia and Adult Illiteracy: Forging the Missing Link," The Learning Disabilities Network *Exchange* 5:2 (Hingham, MA: Fall/Winter 1987-88) p. 4.

3 Lois Taylor, "Dyslexia: A View from a Difficult Vantage Point," *Honolulu Star Bulletin,* 2 May 1986.

4 Project Literacy/Outreach *Update* (Great Neck/Huntington, NY: 1988) p.2.

5 Project Literacy/Outreach "Fact Sheet" (Great Neck/Huntington, NY; 1988).

6 Project Literacy/Outreach *Update* (Great Neck/Huntington, NY: Spring/Summer 1988), p. 1.

7 Ibid.

8 Sharon Fennell, "Betty" (one of "Three Success Stories"), The Learning Disabilities Network *Exchange* 5:2 (Hingham, MA: Fall/Winter 1987-88), p. 7.

9 National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, *Facts about Dyslexia* (Washington, DC: n.d.), p. 1.

10 Sylvia Lotspeich Greene, "Organizing a Language Arts Program for Functionally Illiterate Adults in a Classroom Setting," *Connections* (Boston: Adult Literacy Resource Institute, 1985), p. 30.

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Carolyn Buell Kidder is a reading disabilities specialist who is self-employed full-time as a tutor of dyslexic adults and children.

She has an M.Ed. in Learning Disabilities from Lesley College and a certificate in the Orton-Gillingham phonics instructional method from the Mass. General Hospital.

Before opening her private tutoring practice, she taught reading to dyslexics for eight years in various educational settings in the Boston area, such as the Weymouth Public Schools, the PAL Program at Curry College, a federal program for court-adjudicated youth in Roxbury, and the Mass. General Hospital's Adult Reading Clinic.

In addition to tutoring, Carolyn has also provided in-service training on dyslexia as a consultant to several Boston adult literacy programs.

Two Views of Language Minority Issues

by Tomas Kalmar and Fulano de Tal

Editor's Note: The following two pieces were first distributed as "working papers" to members of the Lawrence Literacy Coalition, an organization of schools and community agencies in the Lawrence, Massachusetts area involved in providing literacy and ESL services to adults. Although not originally distributed together, we felt that they do deal with related issues and therefore would complement one another. The second, "Do We Need a Language Minority Task Force?", is signed by Tomas Kalmar, while the first, as its introduction states, is attributed to "Fulano de Tal."

Nisiquiera en la lengua mia (Even In My Own Tongue)

by Fulano de Tal

Dear Tomas:

I am taking at face value
your offer to let
new voices be heard
through the Lawrence Literacy Coalition.

Some of my best friends are Anglos.
But there are times
when plain truths
need to be spelled out
clearly, if possible.

I find it difficult to say
what I think needs to be said
in English.

But I also find it difficult
to say in Spanish, although
for very different reasons.

Words like recruitment, retention,
positive termination make
very little sense
in Spanish,
I confess I wonder
how much sense
they can make
even in English.

When I speak Spanish
I speak to people who already
understand what I am
trying to say.

But when I speak English,
Anglos seem to have no idea
what I am talking about.

Therefore, I ask you, Tomas, to decide whether "Even in My Own Tongue" is the sort of thing that would help build the Lawrence Literacy Coalition. If so, do what you think best with it.
Tu tocayo,
Fulano

Nisiquiera en la lengua mia

I.
It is true that there are a lot of Hispanics
in Lawrence,
illiterate Hispanics.

But it's also true
that there are many Hispanics in Lawrence
who are *very* literate.
Twice as literate
as the people
who control
the major power
in the city.

II.
It is frustrating to be twice as literate as someone
who makes decisions about your life
without asking for your opinions.

An error was made in the layout of page 29. This page should read as follows:

III.
I've attended many meetings in Lawrence
and the only one that was properly conducted
according to Robert's Rules of Order
was a formal business meeting
of a Latino association
conducted entirely en castellano.

The decisions made
at such a meeting
are legitimate decisions
backed by authentic
democratic process.
Lawrence has a precious resource:
Bilingual parliamentarians
who remain faithful to democracy
despite everything that democracy has suffered
not just in Latin America
but here in the USA.

I do not recall hearing this resource
mentioned
while among people who talk nothing
but English, English, English.

IV.
Sad to say
there is a tendency to assume that
calling someone Hispanic
is pretty close to
calling them illiterate.

At least this is so
in my circles
because, perhaps,
education is my trade
and truly illiterate Hispanics
como mi compadre que no sabe ni la u
are notoriously "hard to reach."

V.
"Some of my students can't
read and write
even in their own language."
This is a remark you hear
over and over again.

VI.
It's a dead give-away:
even in their own language!
Can you believe it! Incredible!

Imagine someone saying
"I can't read and write,
even in my own language."
It would be absurd!

And yet, it's hard, isn't it,
to imagine someone saying
this very thing about illiterate
Anglos. Try it: imagine Gerry d'Amico

saying, "There are red-blooded Americans
who can't read and write
even in their own language."

It sounds very odd.
If you can't read and write,
that's that.

VII.
I can read and write
even in my own language.

The only way I can make sense
out of this situation
is to accept the fact:
reading and writing is one thing
leer y escribir no vale nada.

Knowing how to read and write
in my own language
speaking in my own voice
is not enough.

In order to be literate
I must be able to read and write
in another language.

I must make
another tongue
give voice
to my meaning.

VIII.
For two thousand years
you could not call yourself
literate
letrado
if the only language you knew
was your own.

You were not
literatus
if you read no Latin, no Greek.

Not a lettered man.
Not a citizen in the Republic of Letters.

IX.
My friends can read and write
but only in their own language.
If that's Spanish,
it's not enough,
if English,
it's plenty.

X.
Adult Literacy
the way it's talked about
entails a double standard.

Semi-literacy for Anglos.
Real literacy for Hispanics.

But I have never heard
anyone say
"Hispanic Literacy"
to mean true
real literacy
worthy of the name.

I confess I often hear Hispanic
used as a pejorative term.
Hispanic this, Hispanic that:
it often conveys a sense of
peor
inferior this, inferior that.

Hispanic literacy: inferior literacy.
Alfabetization peor.

XI.
I must say
I don't feel
too bad
because I use
Anglo
as a pejorative term.

For me, Anglo is peor.

I don't know what else to use.
"White" is not what I mean,
is it?
In Spanish we often say
los blancos
to refer to
the Anglos.

"Non-Hispanic"
would make me gag.

XII.
So I say Anglo.
You object.
"I'm Italian," you say.
Or, "I'm not Anglo,
I'm Irish."
And so on.

Nimodo.
We Hispanics need some label
to throw back at
you Anglos.

That's what it sometimes comes down to:
treat me with respect
and I treat you with respect.

In Spanish we say
respeto
which is much more
than mere respect.

XIII.
Anglo: "I can read and write,
but only in my own language."
Hispanic: "Poor Anglo!
I can read and write,
not only
in my own language,
but also
in yours.
I know something
you don't.

XIV.
Manifesto
The Hispanic Community of Lawrence
will begin to get the respect it deserves
when Anglos who can read and write
in only one language —
only in their own —
abolish their own illiteracy
before venturing forth
to "overcome Hispanic illiteracy."

Do We Need a Language Minority Task Force?

by Tomas Kalmar

My work as coordinator of the Lawrence Literacy Coalition requires me to manage a two-way translation process.

When I speak Spanish, I'm often engaged in interpreting an entire universe of discourse, the whole idea labeled "Adult Literacy." It's not just a question of finding two words, one to translate the noun "literacy" and another to translate the adjective, "adult." I feel that I have been charged to do whatever I can to engage the active participation of as many Spanish-speaking Lawrencians as possible in the Lawrence Literacy Coalition. And so, when I'm conversing in Spanish about the Coalition, I often (not always) see in my mind's eye the entire system: the process that persuades the Legislature to establish a line item for Adult Literacy, the flow of millions of dollars of taxpayers' hard-earned money, the people who actually *write* the RFP's in the Mayor's Office, the distribution of RFP's to potential "vendors," "providers," "agencies," the agencies themselves with their (often invisible) Governing Boards, Administrators, full-time staff, overworked, underpaid, part-time teachers (who tend to come and go through a revolving door called "staff turnover," "burnout")... I see the person at the agency who writes the proposal, and sometimes I see the bidders' conference with its peculiar group dynamics... I see, in my mind's eye, the proposal itself: the target population, the eligibility requirements, the outreach, retention, termination policies, the curriculum, the measurable outcomes, the budget, the staffing pattern, the resumes, the letters of support... I see the proposal review process, the point-system, culminating in the final decision that authorizes the winning agency to go ahead and "run" an adult literacy program for yea many "slots"...

All of this, indeed much more, is in my mind's eye as I converse in Spanish about the Coalition, because all of it, the whole ball of wax, is included in the code word *Adult Literacy* and its acronyms — ABE, ESL, GED, even DPE/ET/PVBS...

How to say all of this in Spanish? I try but I do not succeed. And yet when I leave it out I wonder how Spanish-speaking Lawrencians will ever run their own publicly-funded literacy programs. No matter how deeply we Hispanics may have reflected on adulthood, literacy, languages, no matter how experienced we may be in the process of *alfabetization* (the dictionary translation of "literacy"), no matter how intelligent and well-educated we may be — control of publicly-funded Adult Literacy programs will remain in the hands of those who understand "the RFP process" inside out.

But there are also other times when, conversing in Spanish, I forget all this, because I become absorbed in intriguing arguments about what language is *for*, what the alphabet is *for*, what a community is, what feeds the soul, how adults solve problems in a mature way, how friends learn from friends with no money changing hands, public or private. And then I feel that my work requires me to go back to my English-speaking friends and colleagues, to interpret, as best I can, what Spanish-speaking Lawrencians are saying to one another about the power of speech, about literacy that builds community — a universe of discourse that sometimes seems to be ignored by English-speaking communities and task forces.

This is why I say my work requires me to manage a two-way translation process. Certainly Hispanics — and any other Linguistic Minorities — who are unaware of the RFP process will never run a publicly-funded adult literacy program. But by the same token, Anglos (pardon the expression) who run top-notch adult education programs, seem to be unaware of the biggest "gap in services," or if they see the gap, they seem unable to bridge it. The major Adult Literacy programs in Lawrence *are* top-notch; as good as any in the Commonwealth. But in Lawrence, as anywhere else, very few programs can even "target" the population of *analfabetos*, "zero level adults" who are "illiterate even in their own language." And the few programs that try to "serve" this "hard-to-reach" population are plagued by headaches. Outreach is a headache. (How do you say "outreach" in Spanish?) Assessment is a big headache. By what criteria do you measure the reading "level" of someone who attended a village school in a foreign country in the 1940's? The biggest headache seems to be "retention." And proving to the funding source that the "clients" have progressed seems to be the killer — how can you possibly claim that "native-language literacy" is a *marketable skill*?

Those of us who are ESL teachers are acutely aware of the situaiton. Naturally, we see it from our own professional point of view. Everyday, the ESL teacher writes things on the board, and every day, the ESL teacher realizes all over again that there are students in the class who seem to be oblivious of the writing on the wall. At staff meetings we keep saying, "Their literacy skills are too low... what we really need is a *pre*-ESL class for people too low to go straight into ESL 1..."

Let's say Fulano is such a person. Fulano has decided to come to class. Why? Let's say it's because today at work a guy finally made him lose his temper. This guy keeps insulting Fulano and then says, "Hey, I'm just kidding!" But today the guy went too far, Fulano told the guy "FOQYU" and the situation at work got very ugly. So Fulano decides he must go to class so that he can learn how to defend himself, what to say other than "FOQYU" and "I'm sorry."

But the teacher doesn't let him in the classroom. Instead she gives him something to read, in English. It's a test. But reading is not what he needs. He needs to know how to put someone in his place, how to get someone off his back, without risking a punch in the face. The teacher asks him many questions, how long he studied in school when he was a kid . . . Fulano did well in school, finished sixth grade, but didn't go on to *secundaria* because he wanted to help support his family. (He's earned his living since he was thirteen.) The teacher "places" Fulano in the newly-funded "Native Language Literacy/pre-ESL" class. Here he learns how to improve his literacy skills in Spanish. And how to use the subjunctive.

Meanwhile, at work, the guy who has been bugging him invites him out for a beer. It seems they may become friends. It seems that maybe saying "FOQYU," if you say it right, is how you make friend in this country.

Fulano stops going to the class. The agency sees this as an attendance problem, a retention problem, an attrition problem . . . The teacher's salary is in jeopardy. (Performance-based funding! Try saying *that* in Spanish!)

All of this is very familiar to those of us who teach in ESL programs.

Perhaps the problem, the "gap in services" will rapidly diminish if we can just succeed in keeping up this two-way translation process. Can the Coalition nourish a two-way dialogue — not only between teachers and students, but between "English" and "Spanish," between "Adult Literacy" and "alfabetización," between two points of view?

How can we find the words to express in English what seems so obvious when we converse in Spanish? Perhaps I can tell you a story to make one "obvious" point. . . . Let me be Fulano and tell you what the "gap in services" looks like from the other side of the language barrier.

I am Fulano. I know there are millions like me in the USA. We all want to improve our control of the English tongue so that we can defend ourselves, so that we can translate for our newly-arrived brothers and sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, compadres, in-laws — so that we don't have to pull our kids out of school when we have to face the doctor, the policeman, the landlord.

You are an ESL teacher. You tell me you will teach me English — *for free.* I don't have to pay a penny. I accept this, but I know if I don't pay the piper, I can't call the tune. I have never asked for charity, and I don't want you to teach me if you get nothing in return, if it *costs* you. But I know someone pays you. Who? Who pays you to teach me? Who calls the tune? The government pays you. You work for the government. You will teach me what the government wants you to teach me. I can see your personality. I cannot read English, but I can read people. I can read you "like a book." I can see you are a very good person, kind, very patient, full of love. Very intelligent, not rich. Very courteous, very respectful.

But I can also see that you work for the government. I know that the government of this country and the government of my country are different, but I know that no government gives money away — there are always strings, the government always buys at least a million dollars' worth of power for every million dollars it "spends." If it didn't get its money's worth, it would be a very weak government, it would tumble.

All of this I know, not as an abstract concept, but because I can see it when I look at you, I read it in the way you use your body, the way you sit, the way you use your eyes. I can read *the limits* that the government sets for you. Within these limits you are free, but you cannot go beyond them. If you did you would lose your salary and be as poor as I am.

The government says I must sit in a classroom with other people who can't speak English. I have no problems in the classroom. My problems are outside the classroom. If you could sit in my kitchen, meet my family, you would see that paying my electricity bill is more urgent than reading a book. How can I read a book in the dark?

My problems are outside the classroom, and the solutions to my problems are outside the classroom. I am learning English — but not from books. From my new friend, the guy who bought me a beer after I told him "FOQYU." He wants to talk dirty in Spanish. I teach him dirty words in Spanish, he teaches me to talk dirty in English. But not only dirty. When his friends insult him, he doesn't say "FOQYU," he says "GIMIABREIK." When I said this to my children, they laughed and said, "Daddy's learning English." I want to laugh with my children. I don't want them to laugh at me.

The biggest "gap in services" can be bridged. Speaking in my own voice now, not as Fulano, but as coordinator of the Lawrence Literacy Coalition, I hope to convince the Coalition to regard the Hispanic Community not as a bottomless pit of insoluble problems, not as an unreachable target population, but as a resource, a valuable untapped resource. And the same goes for other Linguistic Minorities.

The Hispanic Community does not speak with a single voice. It contains many Fulanos. There's the one whom I've portrayed here, a self-reliant laborer whose "problem" is that he wants to get along with his fellow workers. Why let a language barrier get in the way? During the Bread and Roses Strike, pamphlets were translated daily here in Lawrence into 23 languages. . .

But there's the other Fulano, the one who wrote "Even in My Own Language." He claims to represent colleagues in Lawrence who communicate with the whole community, not just those on one side of the language barrier. These "fully literate" bridge-builders provide an invaluable service. And it seems to me that what is called the Hispanic Community contains many such bridge-builders who want to help.

Can we, the Lawrence Literacy Coalition, make room for a Linguistic Minority Task Force? It's ready to go — all that's needed is for the Coalition to say, whole-heartedly, "Let there be a Linguistic Minority Task Force" — and there will be one, with energetic talented members working hard to lower the so-called "language barrier" from the other side of the gap.

(Of course, I myself can say, "Let there be a Linguistic Minority Task Force" — but is that enough? Would that do? Would that bring it into existence? Others have to legitimize its role, let it "take the floor," give it "equal time," guarantee that its work will not be unintentionally belittled or invalidated.)

Maybe all it takes to reach the hard-to-reach is a willingness to meet each other halfway, a willingness to accept the limits of the RFP process, since no such process will ever recruit, retain and positively terminate Fulano. A willingness to yield, to relax a little, to give Fulano a break.

Perhaps the simplest way to sum up what I am trying to say is this: the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life. The RFP killeth, but the spirit of friendship giveth life. "The Spirit is Working." There is a lively spirit animating Lawrence, a spirit of vigorous democracy, guiding it into the future. This spirit cannot be captured by mere literacy, neither by ESL literacy nor by native Language Literacy.

Literacy has its value. But the spirit of dialogue — and I mean the free give and take of face-to-face spoken dialogue — may prove even more valuable when all's said and done.

Tomas' friend Greg Leeds describes him this way:

Tomas Mario Kalmar, author, poet, educator, father, musician. Tomas grew up in Australia and was a translator there for Paulo Freire. Later, Tomas directed the migrant workers literacy campaign in Southern Illinois. This work, along with his own inspiration, led to his first book, *The Voice of Fulano: Working Papers from a Bilingual Literacy Campaign.*

In Boston, Tomas taught ESL at the Jackson Mann Community School and was staff development coordinator at the Adult Literacy Resource Institute. Today, Tomas heads the Lawrence Literacy Coalition with his left hand, while with his right he directs the Adult Education Program at Alianza Hispana. As he has done for the word "literacy," Tomas will bring fresh meaning to the word "directs."

Tomas participates in a men's writing club, plays the accordian, guitar and piano, and raises two children. He lives in Cambridge with his youngest son, a cartoonist and rock musician. Tomas was born in Mexico, the son of Austrian refugees escaping the holocaust.

The Pittsburgh Literacy Initiative: A Community-Based Model for Meeting Urban Literacy Needs

by Frances Wright

The Pittsburgh Literacy Initiative (PLI) is the permanent coordinating agency for literacy resources and activities in the Pittsburgh region. Its primary role is, through assessment and referral, to direct individuals who need to upgrade their reading skills to the appropriate community-provided program.

This paper will outline the strategies that PLI has identified and implemented to fulfill this primary role in the context of the *demographics* and *resources* of the Pittsburgh area. A historical overview is presented because it is the raising of the literacy consciousness in Pittsburgh which contributed not only to the establishment of PLI but in a very real sense to the national media PLUS campaign.

History of the Pittsburgh Literacy Initiative

The City of Pittsburgh is an urban metropolis with a declining population base. A total population of 423,938 in 1980 was reduced to 397,240 in 1985 and to an estimated 390,588 in 1990 (an overall decline of almost 8%). In the same period, the surrounding Allegheny County has declined by nearly 4% from 1,026,157 in 1980 to a projected 988,411 in 1990. This loss of population can be tied to the profound economic change the region is experiencing. "Industrial obsolescence," in conjunction with the demise of the monolithic steel industry and the movement into the era of high-technology and service industries, are bringing in their wake not only dislocation of workers, but also opportunities for change. It is these dual forces of plant closings and new technology that the Education Commission of the States found are compelling workers to achieve higher levels of literacy and creating new demands for adult literacy services.

Pittsburgh is also the home of the nationally preeminent PBS station, WQED. Under the leadership of President Lloyd Kaiser, it is committed to maximizing the contribution of public television to social issues through programming and community outreach. It is this commitment that led station manager Margot Woodwell to spearhead the national Project PLUS, undertaken as a collaborative effort by ABC and PBS. (Farra, H. *Demographic, Economic and Educational Characteristics of Adults Who Responded to the Adult Literacy Media Campaign: An Urban Profile*, unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 1988).

As early as January, 1984, Dr. Jack Kraft, President of the Community College of Allegheny County, had convened a colloquium of adult educators and community social service agencies interested in the issue of adult illiteracy at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center. Out of that colloquium, the Coalition for Adult Literacy was established and published an initial directory of literacy resources within Allegheny County, using funds from the Community College.

The growing focus locally and nationally on adult literacy came to the attention of WQED station manager, Margot Woodwell. Seeing the need to increase community awareness of the problem through local outreach, Woodwell undertook a research project funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. This research convinced WQED that the literacy base must be substantially broadened if a comprehensive solution to adult literacy was to be found.

Together with John Hair of ABC and other national contacts she had made while working on the local outreach model, Woodwell provided much of the impetus for the National PLUS campaign. It was launched in 1986 as a public service campaign to raise national awareness, to help create local broad-based task forces along the lines of the Chemical People model and to bring the word to the adult illiterate that help was available, together with where it could be found.

As the PLUS Campaign got underway in its "hometown" of Pittsburgh, the deluge of client calls to service providers resulted in a 3-4 month delay in client intake. An immediate need for a central Assessment and Referral Center for adults coming forward for reading help was apparent if they were not to be deterred by a slow and inefficient response to their needs, despite the upbeat nature of the media campaign.

Judith Aaronson, who was to become director of PLI, expressed the need this way: "The crucial first step taken by the non-reading adult is a part of a very powerful yet frightening motivation. This public acknowledgement, that *as an adult* one cannot function effectively, requires enormous sensitivity on behalf of the service delivery system that receives that first call. I envisioned an assessment center that would preserve the dignity of the client by responding immediately to this first step, by involving the client as a full partner in the process and by acting as a personal advocate as the client moved through the service delivery system.

"Increasingly, research is validating my view: that it is misleading and inadequate to consider that we have put students into service simply by matching them geographically with a tutor or program. The PLI model has been designed to accommodate the adult learner's needs *at all stages* of his/her interaction with the complex literacy service delivery system."

With the vision of Ms. Aaronson, the commitment of City Councilwoman Michelle Madoff and the support for a permanent community-side coordinating office for literacy resources and activities from the United Way/PLUS Task Force, Pittsburgh became the first city council in the nation to allocate funds for adult literacy.

In October, 1986, with $60,000 seed money from the Community Development Block Grant funds, PLI was established under the directorship of Judith Aaronson as a project of the non-profit Health and Welfare Planning Association (HWPA). These funds remained at $60,000 in 1987, but have been significantly reduced for the fiscal year 1988-89. This cutback reflects the reduction in the federal CDBG allocation, and the fierce competition for funding from other community service providers.

The State of Pennsylvania also recognized the need. In late 1986, the legislature appropriated $2 million for literacy training programs; the state budget included $5 million for literacy for 1987-88. Governor Casey's commitment to literacy has resulted in a proposed budget of $7 million for 1988-89. PLI's state funding has reflected this increase; an allocation of $30,000 increased to $95,000 for FY 87-88. (State allocations for FY 88-89 have increased to $183,500.)

Within the framework of media focus and the consequent funding allocation by local and state legislators, PLI has flourished and established itself clearly as the assessment, referral and informational core of the literacy movement in Pittsburgh.

By creating and facilitating linkages between clients, service providers, volunteers, businesses, social services and the media, a comprehensive system or network is in place to ensure that the needs of the adult learner are met in terms of both referral and ongoing counseling support. The crucial components of outreach to secure funding and volunteers, as well as encouraging adults in need to come forward, are also continually emphasized.

In regular contact with all service providers, PLI is able to promote their individual client, funding or volunteer needs. Executive directors of the major service providers serve on PLI's Advisory Committee and the largest provider, Laubach-based Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council, and PLI worked together on a fundraising luncheon, keynoted by Mrs. George Bush, who described Pittsburgh as the "Cradle of Literacy." Pennsylvania's first lady Ellen Casey, and Dr. John Christopher, director of Adult Basic Education at the Pennsylvania Department of Education, presented awards to local literacy honorees.

Integrating the literacy component into the whole fabric of social service provision is a major goal of PLI. That task has been greatly facilitated by the involvement of the United Way of Allegheny County. Aware that literacy is part of the complex interrelated range of problems that disadvantaged individuals may face, the United Way convened the PLUS Task Force and has created a model response that is being promoted to all local United Ways by the United Way of America. The Task Force acts as a catalyst, bringing together decision-makers, key leaders and volunteer organizations in the community, and is chaired by Robert W. Hannan, president of Thrift Drug Co. Both PLI's director and coordinator serve on its legislative, business and media committees.

Pittsburgh Literacy Initiative Strategies

An Assessment Center was established to provide sensitive and prompt screening and referral of adult illiterates and low-level readers to the most appropriate service provider. The positive rapport created in the initial client call has achieved a reduction in the no-show category for screening appointments from 40% to 9% (i.e. 91% of clients calling for screening keep their appointments).

The United Way's HelpLine refers calls for literacy help to PLI. Other calls are generated by such sources as media publicity, social service caseworkers and the family and friends of individuals already receiving reading help.

The assessment process includes an oral reading test, a copying exercise and sentence completion writing sample, and a goals inventory. The profile of reading abilities, educational history and personal needs that is compiled is used by a PLI Referral Specialist to make an appropriate client-program match, using the PLI Literacy Services Directory. This Directory is a continually updated composite listing of all service providers. Aware of program differences — one-on-one tutoring, small group instruction, availability of computers, transportation and child care — the Referral Specialist can truly match client needs to a program.

Sample Entries
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY*
Homewood-Brushton 701 N. Homewood Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15208
ABE GED CCAC-H2N CCAC-H3N (database codes) Carol Tosh 371-1600
Description: Basic reading and math skills (ABE) 12 weeks. Basic skills/pre-GED; prepare to take the GED test.
Eligible participants: Open, ABE. GED, must want to get GED. Fee: None, ABE. $55, GED. Hours of program: ABE — T, Th 1-4pm. GED — M,W 6-9pm/T,Th 9-noon.

PROJECT LITERACY
Western Psychiatric Institute & Clinic 3811 O'Hara Street Pittsburgh, PA 15213
BEGINNING READING
PA/LIT10 (database codes) Meliza Jackson 624-2194
Description: Literacy tutoring for mental health clients. Serves clients in all areas.
Eligible participants: Mental health clients. Fee: None. Hours of program: Varies.

Supportive counseling is provided for clients as they *enter* the system and as they *progress* through it. Follow-up phone calls at 2- and 6-month intervals are made to all referred clients to offer support or re-referral if necessary. This essential element of contact, initiated by the professional, *not* the client, has led to an attrition rate of only 30% of PLI-referred clients in contrast to the national rate of 40-60%.

Tracking of client progress is also achieved through regular contact with service providers.

Learning Problems. In response to the unmet needs of adults with learning problems, estimated to be in the region of 40% of non-readers, PLI conducts a demonstration computer-based LP class on-site at Community College of Allegheny County. A PLI staff specialist has written curriculum modules that address the learning needs of illiterate LP adults: "Survival Strategies for Special Students." A checklist is used during the screening process to help identify those adults with learning problems.

Volunteer Management. Literacy remains heavily in the province of volunteerism. As a result of the existence of PLI, an ACTION VISTA program has been instituted. This program has been recently expanded and PLI now supervises 30 VISTA volunteers who have been placed in most local literacy agencies. The PLI project is now the largest VISTA program of any kind in the United States. They perform services such as recruiting, fundraising, training and compiling resources and meet monthly at PLI to share insights and successful strategies. In addition, all potential community literacy volunteers calling the United Way HelpLine are referred to PLI, which holds a monthly informational and orientation meeting. These volunteers are then matched with agencies that have requested specifically qualified or available volunteers (including PLI).

Database Management. From its inception, Director Aaronson envisaged the use of computer databases to generate comprehensive literacy information. Currently, PLI maintains 3 different databases (using D-Base III+ on IBM XT and AT systems): client information, literacy service provider information and volunteer information.

The Client Database stores demographic data on clients screened by PLI. This allows the generation of reports containing the number of clients screened by the categories of race, age, sex and geographic location. In addition, student progress can be tracked, facilitating the evaluation of such factors as client satisfaction, progress towards established goals and program completion rates.

The Literacy Service Provider Database allows PLI to maintain its directory, an updated listing of all agencies, class times, costs and other information needed by the Referral Specialists.

The Volunteer Database is under construction and will store demographics, interest areas and times available for volunteers, to allow more systematic matching of volunteers to agencies in need. The information yielded by the databases is crucial to answer the demands of public and private funders and adult learners for accountability. The computerized tracking of clients also helps prevent the individual adult learner from being lost in the maze of the service delivery system.

Workplace Literacy. PLI is aware that structuring goals for reading is a difficult task for the non-literate adult. The need for contextual programs that reinforce the individual's desire to improve reading skills has encouraged PLI to work in partnership with businesses to help screen their employees and put workplace literacy programs in place. Readability analyses are also made of in-house and promotional material for businesses, along with re-writing suggestions. A state-funded project will address the need for a writing skills curriculum based on workplace needs.

Outreach and Staffing. These strategies exist within the framework of extensive outreach activities. PSA's have been produced and are running on local TV and radio stations. A newsletter, "On-Line Literacy," funded by the Westinghouse Foundation and Donnelley Directory, is produced quarterly and serves as a major informational and communications vehicle. Field assessments are being conducted at public housing sites and liaisons created with agencies who serve potential clients including the Office of Employment Securi-

Pittsburgh Literacy Initiative

Adult Literacy Screening and Referral Report

7/1/87 to 4/4/88

Total number of adults contacted	245
Total screened and referred	205
Total other	40
Total males	120/245 or 49%
Total males screened	107/205 or 52%
Total females	118/245 or 48%
Total females screened	96/205 or 47%
Background information on total screened/referred	205

Pittsburgh Literacy Initiative

Referral Summary Report

9/1/86 to 3/11/88

The number of referrals does not reflect the total of those in Allegheny County seeking reading instruction. Many individuals seek assistance directly from service agencies. These totals only include those people who have contacted PLI directly or have been referred to PLI by agencies such as HelpLine.

Service Providers/Number Referred

Allegheny County Literacy Council	67
Assoc. for Children with Learning Disabilities	3
Allegheny Intermediate Unit	4
Board of Education	subtotal 146
-Connelley Skill Learning Center	30
-Peabody	6
-South High School	9
Bidwell	41
Beaver County Literacy Council	1
Community College	subtotal 146
-Allegheny	24
-Boyce	7
-Downtown	27
-Homewood-Brushton	9
-JTPA, Braddock Ctr.	5
-Basal Program	19
-North	13
-Parkway West	1
-Specific Reading Skills	14
-South	15
-Duffy Program (CAI)	12
English Language Institute	1
Focus on Renewal	8
Greater Pittsburgh Council	subtotal 155
Lycoming County Literacy Project	1
N. Kensington Arnold School District	1
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation	3
Operation Better Block — Homewood	2
Penn Hills School District	8
People's Library — New Kensington	2
PGH Hearing, Speech and Deaf Services	1
PLI Learning Problems Class	12
Pittsburgh Partnership City	3
Project Learn	41
Project Literacy	1
The Learning Center	6
University of Pittsburgh	4
Wilkinsburg School District	2
Westmoreland County Literacy Council	1
TOTAL	560

Adult Literacy Screening and Referral Report

7/1/87 to 4/4/88

Total Number of Adults Contacted	245
*Total Screened	205
*Total Other	40
Total Males	120/245 or 49%
Total Males Screened	107/205 or 52%
Total Females	118/245 or 48%
Total Females Screened	96/205 or 47%

Background Information on Total Screened/Referred	205
*Welfare Recipients	63/205 or 31%
*Minority	109/205 or 53%
*Unemployed	117/205 or 57%
*H.S. Graduates	62/205 or 30%
*Displaced Homemakers	5/205 or 2%

Reading Levels of Total Screened/Referred	205
*0-4	132/205 or 64%
*5-8	52/205 or 25%
*9+	21/205 or 10%

Reading Levels of High School Graduates	62
*0-4	30/62 or 48%
*5-8	24/62 or 39%
*9+	8/62 or 13%

Statistics for 9/1/86 to 10/15/88

Clients Interviewed and Tested	1083
Direct Referrals	54

(referrals made without the complete screening process)

Reading Levels of Clients Tested (634)

(634) 59% at 0-4 Grade Level (Functionally Illiterate)

(248) 23% at 5-8 Grade Level (Marginally Literate)

(200) 18% at 9+ Grade Level

Demographics on Clients Tested

Males	520 or 48%
Females	563 or 52%
Unemployed	581 or 54%
Welfare	393 or 43%
Minority	644 or 66%

High School Graduates Tested (308 or 28%)

(115) 37% at 0-4 Grade Level (Functionally Illiterate)

(97) 31% at 5-8 Grade Level (Marginally Literate)

(96) 31% at 9+ Grade Level

ty, JTPS's Single Point of Contact program, the Department of Welfare, work release programs for male and female offenders, armed services recruiters and local Head Start officials.

An Alumni Recognition Program is being cosponsored by the Allegheny County Bar Association and a local book shop. In conjunction with the University of Pittsburgh a drop-out survey is being conducted and assistance provided in the validation of a new reading assessment instrument. A promotional video is to be produced to alleviate client stress and to serve as a recruitment and funding tool. City Council resolutions honoring literacy are introduced, and PLI promotes the national image of Pittsburgh within the Urban Literacy Network, serving as an informational exchange site.

PLI's strategies are implemented by a dedicated professional staff of seven (Director; Assessment, Volunteer, Community Outreach, Special Projects and Research Coordinators; Readability Specialist) assisted by one Secretary, five full-time VISTA Volunteers and some 60 committed part-time volunteers.

Conclusion

As we knock on the doors of potential funding sources, such as foundations and local businesses; as we write hefty grant proposals to the City and the State; as we master the skills of desktop publishing to reduce our printing costs and improve our marketing image; as we helped plan and coordinate the Adult Literacy and Technology Conference (held in Pittsburgh, July 1988), looking to IBM and Apple for their leadership in this field; as we explain our strategies to literacy programs in Houston, Baltimore, Detroit, Washington, DC, and Columbus, Ohio; and as we view with pleasure the expansion of the Carnegie Library-based *Beginning With Books* program, we keep continually in mind that our ultimate goal is our own demise — the eradication of adult illiteracy.

And as we view with commitment the City of Pittsburgh that we serve, it becomes increasingly clear to us that we must continue to deliver our coherent, forceful message as an agency representative of the literacy community, supported by hard demographic data. The message we bring to the legislators, planners, business and community leaders with whom we work is simple — there can be no economic future if there is among both the unemployed and those workers whose job descriptions are changing a sizable proportion who are unable to read the job manuals of the new technology. There can be no economic future if a substantial number of our young people lack the reading skills necessary for them to be marketable in the workplace of the new economy. Moreover, the cycle of illiteracy will not be broken if these young adults, as they become parents, are unable to inculcate in their children a respect for reading both as an essential life skill and as a leisure activity.

Frances Wright was educated in England and New Zealand. She joined the staff of Pittsburgh Literacy Initiative in August, 1987. As Coordinator for Community Outreach she is responsible for media and public relations. She is also editor of PLI's quarterly newsletter "On-Line Literacy" and supervises outreach activities that include an Alumni Award Program, Correctional Literacy programs, a video production "In Our Own Words" and research in cooperation with the University of Pittsburgh.

A Storybook Ending

by Lisa A. Santagate

(Editor's Note: Lisa first wrote this article in December of 1987; time references should be seen from that perspective. The photos and text which follow the article are portions of the photostory which Lisa and her friends produced.)

Working as a home tutor for the past year has been a wonderful learning experience for me. Traveling to people's homes is a unique way to combine culture with language development. I am currently working with a Cambodian refugee family in East Boston. There are four family members: Sary Tou — age 52, Pihm Ninh — age 52, Mom Marm — age 20 and Samed — age 18 months. Sary Tou and Pihm Ninh are married; Mom Marm is their daughter and Samed is their granddaughter. Mom is the most advanced in English. She joins my sessions when she can, but is progressing wonderfully in school. I work mainly with Sary Tou and Pihm Ninh. I come to their home every Wednesday from 4-6 p.m. Aside from a short break in the summer, I have been seeing them steadily since last December.

Although I have been working with Sary Tou and Pihm Ninh for a year, unfortunately their progress with English has been very slow. They both knew only the alphabet when they arrived in the States (someone had taught it to them in the Philippines when they were living there), so we have plenty to do each session. However, teaching at home, while putting culture right in the classroom so to speak, also can slow down the learning process drastically. The telephone rings, neighbors drop by, the baby is sick . . . All these everyday life situations put a big burden on a teacher who tries to provide a smooth and steady learning environment. For many months I felt frustrated. I had no formal classroom — no neutral territory. I was here to help these people and I wanted to do the best job that I could. Knowledge of the English language was a tool that could help them all get ahead. They could not work because they could not speak English well enough. If I could help them to learn English, perhaps they could move out of their squalid neighborhood.

The pressure I felt when teaching Sary Tou and the family was definitely self-imposed, but their situation was so real and close to me. I saw them in their neighborhoods — I could witness the nervousness when someone knocked on the door. I saw their crowded apartment where 4 people sleep in one room. I did not have the detachment that a regular classroom provides. These people did not show up without their families or living situations, ready to sit and listen to me and see me write on the chalkboard. They did not listen to a class full of other students in similar situations also struggling with language and new environment.

I floundered for a long time, faithfully showing up with flashcards and books, but something was missing. While learning did take place, it seemed very superficial. Lessons were easily put aside and forgotten when I left the house. Not all of this (or maybe none of it) had much to do with me or my teaching abilities. My family was collecting support from the government. While knowing English would definitely put them ahead, it was not necessary. They could afford to live and eat regardless of their speaking and writing capabilities.

What good fortune I had taking a class entitled "Theory and Practice of Adult ESL," with Elsa Auerbach at UMass/Boston. Here, a lot of my questions and doubts about teaching my refugee family at home were answered. I had been so fragmented and overwhelmed by my situation that I was getting bogged down now by what seemed like simple problems. Reading about Paulo Freire and his ideas about education was one of the most important tools I have discovered in my career as a teacher. His suggestions to help make learners critically conscious of their own reality and to question why they are in the positions they are in was advice which is now philosophy incorporated into my own teaching practices. I needed to involve my students in the long journey of examining their existence and working hard to better their positions in the new environments they found themselves in.

Many of the works I read concerning the participatory approach to teaching ESL to adults and the tools which can help promote language and literacy were excellent frames of reference when sitting down and critically examining my own role as a teacher/learner. My visits with my refugee family started to get less upsetting and more exciting for me. Stories about other refugees and their experiences with the English language provided much food for thought when working out lesson plans and ideas to use in my special classroom.

The Photography Project

While the language experience approach and organic primers were tools I considered, I really felt it was necessary to get my students more involved. I found the prospect of using photographs to help promote language was an exciting one. What was even more appealing was the idea of actually producing a photostory with Sary Tou and her family. I felt that their participation in such a project would not only be fun, it would also give them a chance to look at their lives more critically — they could reflect on their situation and learn to be less complacent about their existence.

The idea for a photostory turned out to be one of the most rewarding learning experiences, not only for Sary Tou and her family, but for me as well. I would now like to give the reader a closer look at the production of "Making it in Massachusetts," a photostory created by Sary Tou, Pihm Ninh, Mom Marm and friends.

I wanted to gradually set the stage for my plans to create a photostory. I spoke to the family and presented my ideas to them. Because Mom Marm's English is the most advanced, I had her go back and explain everything to her parents in case they had missed anything. Everyone seemed excited. I told them all that if our story was good enough, we could help other Cambodians with English by allowing other teachers and tutors to use it. I told them I would come the following week with my camera so we could start.

The next week I arrived to find a clean house and a nervous family. Quickly, Mom Marm took Samed into the bedroom, only to bring her out 5 minutes later smartly clad in a pink taffeta dress and black patent leather shoes. Neighbors dropped by to join in the fun. Everyone was happy and quite animated. It was interesting to see all the fuss the camera had caused. Much to my dismay, my camera broke in the middle of our wonderful photo session. We all tried to fix it, but it was no use. Everyone was very disappointed, but I promised to return soon with a new camera. It was so moving to see their displays of pride — a tidy house, a pretty baby. The emotions this exercise provoked in me made me so glad I decided on this type of project. Already I felt closer to everyone and more in touch with good feelings from a teaching point of view.

I showed up a few days later with a new camera. Once again, I witnessed a quick house-tidying. We were now ready to start. I took a bunch of pictures of the family and let Sary and Pihm Nihm also take a few. They were interested in how the camera worked and it was such a great way to get some new vocabulary words out. Their interest levels were quickly moving up. They were more involved than ever before in our lessons. They weren't just passive recipients of language—they were creating and influencing it! Pihm Ninh and I planned on walking around the neighborhood during my next visit to snap a few local sights. Sary wasn't interested in going out in the cold weather as she has a shoulder injury which is exacerbated by the cold.

I arrived next time, once again excited by the new enthusiasm my camera provided. Sary saw us off and Pihm Ninh and I had a nice walk. We shot pictures of the apartment house where they live and the grocery where they shop. At the grocery store, Pihm Ninh chatted with the owner while I got a few shots of the store and the shopkeeper's little son who was helping out. We then walked to the center of town and Pihm Ninh took a few more pictures, excited at being able to use the camera. We walked back to the house and I told everyone to be ready to help with the story because next time I would have the pictures developed.

I thought a lot about what the story-writing process would be like. Neither Sary nor Pihm Nihn are good enough at English to dictate a story well. I counted on Mom Marm to help with translation as well as Narang, a 14-year old boy who is sharing the apartment with Sary's family (along with his mother, father and young sister). I would help when and if necessary, but I wanted to keep out of the text writing as much as I could.

The pictures were developed and they all came out — what a relief! I called Mom Marm and told her I needed her help with the text. She promised to be at home for my next scheduled visit.

I arrived for my next visit with the photos. Everyone was so excited to see them! We all sat down and looked the pictures over — oohs and aahs took the place of words. There was a lot of chatter going on in Khmer. It was so fascinating to see what reactions the pictures were eliciting from the students.

Writing the Story

The most important thing now was to get everyone on the English-speaking track. I told everyone that it was time to use the pictures to write the story about Sary and her family. I was curious to see what ideas everyone had and how well they would be able to express them with their limited English proficiency. Sary seemed most interested in the story-writing and we decided she should write the text with help from everyone. She wanted to tell a story about her family. We decided to put the pictures in the order as they were to appear in the story. From there we could get a good grasp on the story flow. It was much easier for everyone involved to take the pictures and then write the story rather than writing the story and then matching the pictures up with it. The photos themselves were so loaded that they provided such a strong impetus for language growth and use. I then explained to everyone (neighbors were around, excited about the pictures) that I needed to work alone with Sary and Mom Marm. I promised to bring the finished product back soon.

The story-writing part of this project was interesting. Sary and her family have always been a bit reluctant when talking about their lives before arriving in America. I was hoping the pictures would open everyone up a little more than usual. I was not expecting a complete oral history to come out, but I hoped that more than the usual fragmented disclosure about the family would surface.

Because Sary and Mom Marm can't write too well in English, I was to write down the story that they dictated to me. From the start, Sary tried hard to call up all the English words she knew with help from Mom Marm. The story flowed remarkably well. It was fascinating to see how the pictures provided such a strong starting point for the language use. Oftentimes, after I had written the appropriate part of the text for a given photo, Sary and Mom Marm would still be talking in their native language. Not only did the photos provoke use of English — it also prompted more use of conversation in Khmer than I had ever heard between the family members.

It took about 2 hours to get the whole story down. I explained to Sary and Mom Marm that I wanted to get a photo album to arrange the pictures in. Then I would take the story, type it up and place it with the pictures. I asked them both if they had any ideas and Sary said to make sure to put a picture of myself in the story! She told Mom Marm (who loosely and simply translated into English for me) that I was a part of their lives here in America and I should be part of their story. I was moved and excited — this idea for a photostory was turning out much better than I had originally anticipated. I promised to put a picture of myself in the story and we talked about where it should be placed and what text should accompany it. I left, feeling overwhelmed by the success of the project.

I put the photo album together at home and added a picture of myself. I typed the story on index cards and matched the story cards up with corresponding photos according to the order Sary had chosen. I chose a title I thought would be catchy. I must say, the photostory came out beautifully! I looked forward to showing the finished product to Sary, her family and her friends in the neighborhood.

I took the photostory over during my next home visit, along with some party food to celebrate the completion of our masterpiece. The response to the photostory was incredible. This object was something they had created. To have something tangible to show them, and to see their reactions only reinforced my positive feelings about this type of exercise.

The photostory and its development really brought me closer to Sary and her family, and I know it linked everyone to the English language in a unique way. Using photos to elicit language (both oral and written) is a tool which has innumerable possibilities for teachers and students. While other materials I have used with Sary and her family have been practical, I feel that this work on the photostory provided some really good lesson material, which was so much more concurrent with the family's culture. Linking language skills with culture should be an integral part of any teacher's general curriculum and this exercise really proved how important that connection can be when working with low level beginners outside of the formal classroom.

I plan on using photos regularly in my lessons now with Sary and her family, and in all my other teaching situations. I really feel that the photos put everyone involved so much more in touch with their social reality than any other exercise I could have chosen. I highly recommend it to other teachers for use both in a home visit situation and a formal classroom.

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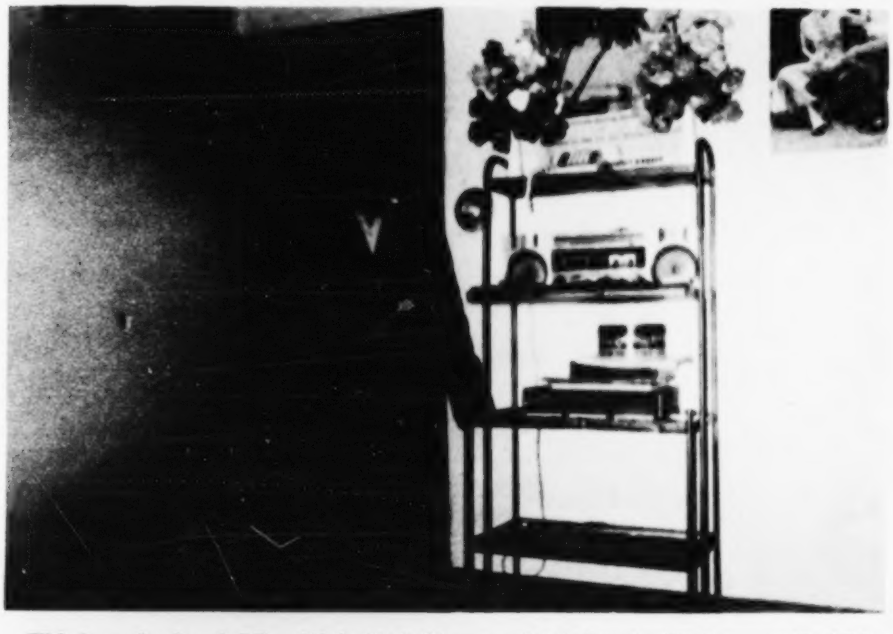
Lisa Santagate became interested in ESL after a wonderful year abroad, living and working in Athens, Greece, and Oslo, Norway, during which time she gave English lessons to make money to travel. She has a B.A. from the University of New Hampshire and an M.A. from the University of Massachusetts/Boston in Applied Linguistics/ESL Studies. She now works as an ESL teacher in the Dedham Public Schools.

A Photostory by Sary Tou, Pihm Nihn and Mom Marn

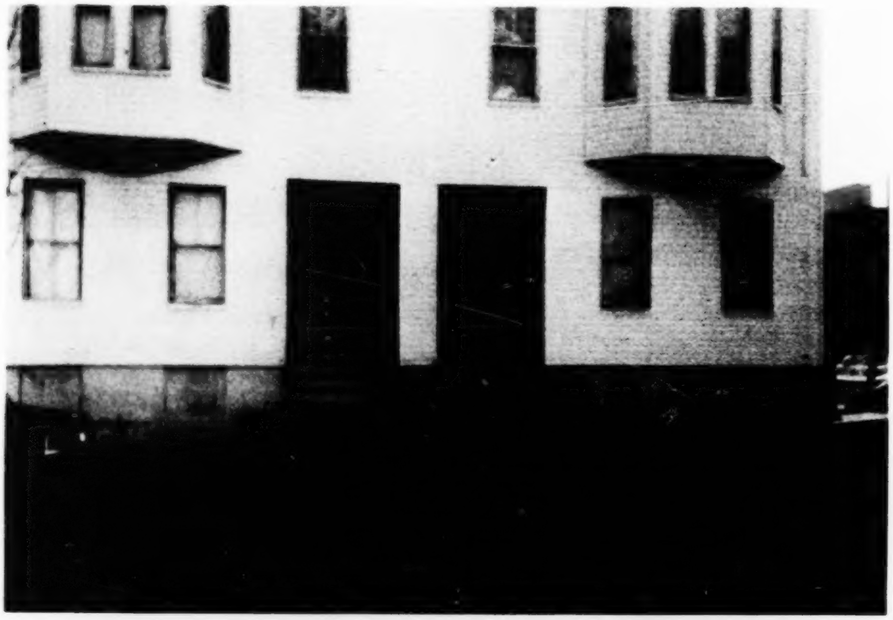
My name is Sary Tou. I arrived in Boston one year ago with my husband, Pihm Nihn, my daughter, Mom Marm, and my granddaughter, Samed. Because of political problems, we left Cambodia in 1985 to live in a refugee camp in Thailand. We stayed there for one year. Then we went to the Philippines for five months before arriving in Boston in November, 1986. It has not been easy here in Boston. We have moved five times in one year! We do not know enough English to work, so the government supports us. We are poor, but we are happy.



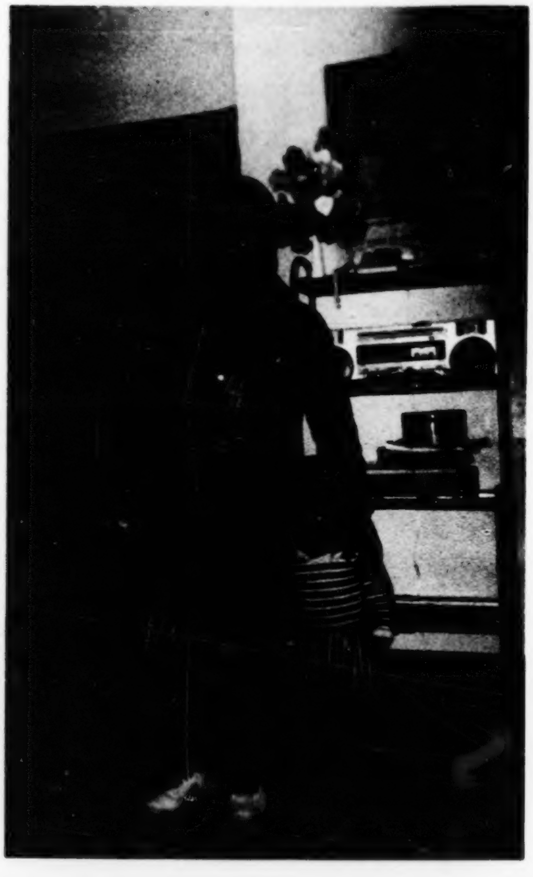
This is my husband, Pihm Ninh. He is 52 years old. In Cambodia, he was a Buddhist priest. Here he does not work. He is going to the Harborside School in East Boston to learn English. Maybe then he can get a job. I hope so. He is bored not working. Many times he has told me he wants so bad to work. When he is home, sometimes he is very quiet. I want him to be happy here in America. I hope he can work soon.

This is my daughter, Mom Marm and my granddaughter, Samed. Mom goes to the Harborside School too. Her English is getting better. She gets very tired from her studies and she sleeps a lot. Her husband was killed in Thailand just before Samed was born. Mom Marm is 20 years old. I am sorry she is here alone with a small baby. We are glad she is in America with us.

Samed is 18 months old. Last month we found out that she is deaf. She has to wear hearing aids, and once a week, a nice woman from the health clinic comes to teach her sign language. We were sad to learn of her hearing problem. We hope to find a school for her to go to with other deaf children.



Here is a picture of our house. We live on the first floor. Because the rent is so much money, we need to share the apartment with another family. My family shares one bedroom. The other family shares the other bedroom. The kitchen and living room we all share.



This is Narong and Lina. They are the children of Kooeun Ohm and Pinh Phan. They share the apartment with us. They are very nice. Narong is 14 years old. His English is very good. Lina is two years old. She plays with Samed. We are glad to be living with such nice people.

These are our next door neighbors. They come to visit everyday. When they are here, we can speak our native language. We look forward to their visits.

CAO PALACE
SEAFOOD
Restaurant and Fish Market
CAO PALACE
Vietnamese & American
SEAFOOD
Restaurant and Fish Market

Sometimes for a special treat, we travel by subway to this restaurant in Allston. Here we can enjoy good food. It feels good to go out in the city.

NAM-A MARKET

This is where we shop. Here we buy rice and other Cambodian food. We are lucky to have a store like this so close to our house.

This is the shopkeeper. She is nice and makes us feel close to home with the good Cambodian food she sells.

Here are Pihm Nihn and Samed again. They are out together a lot. When Mom Marm is in school, Pihm Nihn takes Samed out for walks. Pihm Ninh loves Samed very much.

Here is Pihm Ninh sleeping with his coat on. Our house is very cold in the winter. We don't have too much money to use for heat.

Here is our friend Lisa. She comes to see us every week and helps us with our English. We are glad to have Lisa in our lives.

We are glad to be in America. We are glad to be alive.

Meeting the Needs of Unprepared Students in Higher Education

by Emilie Steele

(Editor's Note: The following was first written as part of a doctoral thesis on basic skills programs in higher education. Though the college setting makes the context of this article different from that of most community ABE programs, the issues Emilie Steele discusses are certainly relevant to these programs and the populations they serve.)

History of Remedial Programs in Higher Education

Remedial education is not new to higher education:

> In the nineteenth century, many colleges and universities operated "preparatory departments" that provided instruction in precollege subjects not offered in many secondary schools of the time... (*Involvement in Learning*, 1985, p. 48).

Cross (1976) tells us that in 1894 even Wellesley College had a remedial course of study. Cross goes on to explain that in the early days of remediation, "poor study habits" were seen as the cause of lack of academic achievement and remediation consisted solely of teaching students "how to study" (p. 25). Cross adds that by the 1930's and '40's, poor development of reading comprehension skills was added to poor study habits and remedial courses came to include reading skills. She points out that the next shift came in the 1950's and '60's, when, along with vastly increased numbers of students seeking higher education, came an attempt to distinguish between two groups of students, those with true ability (who should be helped) and those lacking in ability (who should not). Finally, in the 1960's came another shift with attention paid to "psychological-motivational blocks to learning and sociocultural factors relating to deprived family and school backgrounds" (Cross, 1976, p. 27).

Crawford (1979) points out that tutorial help as a form of remediation has always been available to two groups of students: those who could pay for the services and those athletes who were important to a college's sports programs. However, with the advent of open admissions policies, more and more students were admitted to degree programs who would have been turned down in the past because of their lack of appropriate skills (Cross, 1976). These students were also new to higher education as they were often the first in their families to try to attain a college degree. They included many veterans taking advantage of the G.I. Bill, minorities and women, groups to a large extent encouraged by the Civil Rights Movement in the '60's and the Women's Movement of the '70's to increase their levels of education (Crawford, 1979; Cross, 1971). Their needs led to the establishment of basic skill and remedial courses on many campuses (Crawford, 1979).

Rouece and Snow (1977) state that the early remedial programs of the 1960's often showed disastrous results. Students moved in and out of them, and most (nearly 90%) showed no improvement and went on to fail the academic program. Others simply dropped out of school and became victims of the "revolving door" of higher education (Zwerling, 1976). Roueche and Snow (1977) believe that the reasons for these negative results include the inappropriate selection of remedial faculty, (i.e., untrained and inexperienced), low expectations for the students enrolled, poor choice of materials, and lack of identification of real skill needs of the students.

Current Thinking about Skills Programs

It is generally thought that in order to meet the needs of students with poor academic skills, institutional programs should include a variety of responses. Many (Roueche et al, 1984; Richardson et al, 1984; Baker and Reed, 1980-81; Cross, 1976) suggest that model programs include mandatory pre-assessment of all entering students' skills and specific learning prescriptions for those identified as having poor academic skills. Learning prescriptions include required placement and regular attendance in special developmental classes followed by completion of specific skill tasks (or competencies) before the student may progress to the next level. Further, such programs usually offer both academic and personal counseling by staff specifically recruited and trained to work with such students. Some institutions, while offering internal credit for the course work such students must complete as they develop basic skills, do not count such courses towards graduation. Learning centers are also available and courses are often offered through these centers as well as access to peer tutors.

In general, institutions thought to be the most successful can be said to be very intrusive in the lives of those students identified as having poor academic skills. Thus, the literature suggests that an institution hoping to be successful with such students should have all or most of the above available to its academically unprepared students. And, indeed, some programs are beginning to incorporate many of these recommendations (See, for example, Crawford, 1979, discussion of Niagara University; Goldman, 1981, discussion of Wayne Community College; Cross, 1976, discussion of LaGuardia Community College).

In a landmark attempt to discover how institutions of higher learning were affected by the enrollment of students with poor basic skills, Roueche and his colleagues (1984) conducted a massive study of all two- and four-year postsecondary education institutions in the United States. The results of this research suggest that there are no institutions of higher learning that do not have such students. Further, and of most importance, they concluded that those institutions likely to be most successful in helping students are those with a strong administrative commitment to the task. In other words, in addition to having specially-trained teachers and counselors, curriculum specifically designed to meet the students' learning needs, required attendance in a course sequence, and mandatory entrance and exit testing, programs must also have the explicit backing of their administrative officers. Such programs require regular financial commitment. As Robinson (1983) states,

> . . .all education is in some sense compensatory or remedial; all good education is costly; educational costs, unlike many others our society incurs, lead to profits in the social calm and cohesion that allow for productive work (p. 16).

Faculty Attitudes toward Students with Poor Skills

What role does faculty attitude toward students with poor skills play in how well these students are able to do in academic settings? The literature on illiterate adults suggests that they are fully aware of the disdain that society has for those who lack the most basic skills needed to survive in our complex society (Fingeret, 1983; Kozol, 1980). Why else do illiterate adults go to such lengths to hide their inability to read and write? Similarly, older students with poor skills would seem particularly vulnerable to the views that faculty hold toward their ability to learn. Are they college material? If they have not learned basic reading and writing skills before, is it really possible to teach them now? And, if we can agree that, of course, such students can learn and that a college environment is an appropriate place to teach them, how best can we help them to learn?

The attitudes or beliefs about what and how students can learn held by those who would teach the underprepared students are critical to what these students will eventually learn. As has been mentioned earlier in this article, faculty who teach students with poor skills need to have been specifically prepared to do so. But, what exactly does "being prepared" mean?

Cohen and Brawer (1983) point out that instructors in remedial or developmental courses seem "to pay closer attention to their students, integrate teaching with counseling, and provide a greater variety of learning materials than ordinary students receive" (p. 212).

Shaughnessy (1977) has argued that teachers need to understand the meaning of academic work to the student with poor skills (she specifically focused on basic writers) and to recognize the nature of the mistakes they make. Scribner and Cole (1981) point to the need to understand "the role and functions of writing outside of school, the aspirations and values which sustain it, and the intellectual skills it demands and fosters" (p. 76).

Roueche and Snow (1977) believe that teachers must create an environment for student success by showing that they care about students, by getting to know their students, and by communicating daily positive expectations for students. Further, they state that teachers must understand how to set course objectives and use methods that are a composite of, or take account of, cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills.

Hairston (1982) argues for a new paradigm to be used in the teaching of writing that includes seeing writing as a process, teaching various strategies for generating material, pointing out the importance of audience and purpose, evaluating the final product by how well it meets "the writer's intention and meets the audience's needs" (p. 86), seeing the recursive nature of the composing process, seeing writing as an activity that involves the intuitive and non-rational as well as the rational faculties, and, perhaps most important, seeing that "writing is a way of learning and developing as well as a communication skill" (p. 86). Gould and Heyda (1986) go a step further and suggest that basic writing courses can and must include "critical literacy skills" (p. 19). They warn teachers not to assume that basic writers are not capable of abstract reasoning and/or complex thought. They criticize those courses based upon the notion that writing instruction ought to begin with the formulation of the thesis statement (or controlling idea) followed by the development of an outline and, lastly, the identification of appropriate evidence. "In other words (the notion that) prescribed form regulates thought." (p. 14).

There are many others from the field of skills research who have commented on how best to teach unprepared readers and writers (See, for example, Perl, 1979; Flower, 1979; Elbow, 1982; Stotsky, 1982; Troyka, 1982). All of these suggestions about what instructors of underprepared students need to consider as they design, implement and evaluate courses or programs provide evidence that any institution hoping to provide appropriate services to these students must have administrative support. Teachers will need the benefit of time to plan, time to share ideas, time to read and reflect on the myriad of suggestions and research in what is obviously a growing professional area. They will also need time to plan and carry out evaluations of the effectiveness of whatever services are provided to their students.

However, the resposibility for seeing that students acquire adequate reading and writing skills must not only include those facultly who teach students with poor skills, but must also include all faculty in a higher education setting. An example of greater faculty involvement in the teaching of skills is "writing across the curriculum," in which the teaching of skills is integrated into all courses and not just limited to those offered by English departments. Robinson (1983) argues persuasively that the teaching of skills must be shared by faculty throughout all academic disciplines before we can truly have successful programs. He believes that the huge numbers of students needing help is evidence for such an approach. He also states that different fields require different types and levels of literacy which can best be taught by faculty in each field.

But, there is another reason why all faculty need to be involved in the process. D'Angelo (1983) suggests that to improve students' writing, we need to increase their conscious control of certain kinds of cognitive activities. Students can and do perform complex tasks daily, such as classifying, abstracting, recognizing relationships, and analyzing, but they perform these tasks "in the concrete activities of everyday life" (p. 111). We need to show them how to consciously use these strategies in their thinking, reading and writing. It makes sense that the more opportunities students have to practice such activities, the easier it will be for them to master the tasks and to make them a part of their writing repertoire.

This argument would be shared by those who strongly urge against placing students in separate remedial programs until they can demonstrate proficiency. Cohen and Brawer (1983), for example, believe that it is important for students with poor basic skills to participate, albeit on a limited and very focused basis, in college-wide curricular offerings. They point to "studies done by the City Colleges of Chicago (that) revealed that tracking students into remedial courses had not produced desirable outcomes. . ." (p. 219).

However, what seems to work instead involves the cooperation of faculty at-large working with skills faculty to assure that the teaching of skills takes place throughout the curriculum. But, they also acknowledge that faculty at-large often prefer that the most unprepared students be limited to separate remedial classes because it is so difficult to know how to respond to so many learning needs within one classroom.

> "Teaching groups of students whose reading or computational abilities range from the third to the thirteenth grade is discouraging; everything is more difficult from writing examinations to showing group progress" (pp. 213-14).

While it is important that all faculty be concerned with the teaching of skills, Richardson et al (1983) caution against the "watering-down" of reading and writing tasks to the extent that students hardly do any critical thinking. They see this as a lowering of academic standards which can only result in students graduating from college ill-prepared to be responsible citizens participating fully in a highly technical society.

Attitudes of Students with Poor Basic Skills Toward Learning

We cannot conclude a review of the literature without, at least, referring to what has been written about the attitudes of the learners themselves. Much has been attributed to such students, including the fears that they bring to learning situations. There are those who suggest that under-prepared learners often have low self-esteem, poor self-concept and are more likely to feel that circumstances are not within their control (Roueche and Mink, 1976; Wilson, 1979; Griffin, 1980) and, thus, are more afraid of failing than are other students. Some believe these attitudes stem from negative childhood school experiences (Phipps, 1981) Roueche and Mink (1976) argue that if students "expect to fail, it is because they have failed in the past" (p. 46).

But, perhaps there is an even greater fear that these students face. Bizzell (1986) raises important questions about what the experience of being in an academic setting might mean to students with poor skills. Although she discusses basic writers, her concerns clearly apply to all students with poor reading and writing skills. She posits the idea that, typically, educators believe such students experience "a clash among dialects" (p. 294), a lack of experience with "discourse forms" (p. 295), or "a clash of ways of thinking" (p. 296). Faculty respond to each of these experiences differently. So, for example, educators who believe that the problem is a clash of dialects emphasize the teaching of Standard English through traditional composition courses. On the other hand, those who see the problem as a lack of experience with discourse forms may insist that students need to learn "academic genres" (p. 295) in order to be successful in college. Bizzell also adds that there are those who believe that it is "the criteria for success in college (that) must change" rather than the students (p. 295). Finally, those who define the problem as a clash of ways of thinking point to developmental psychology and the work of those such as Jean Piaget or William Perry. Unfortunately, as Bizzell notes, students with poor skills are generally to be found at the most concrete end of the developmental schemes. Perhaps, this is the result of the mistaken belief that such students have not reached an "adequate" stage of cognitive development and therefore do not practice abstract reasoning. Or, perhaps this only reflects our rather limited ability to test for and recognize such skills.

Bizzell suggests that we must go beyond the narrow focus of limiting our understandings to any one of these experiences or problems. Instead, she argues that it is a clash in "world views" that creates problems for such students. And, she finds those of us who would help such learners guilty of not understanding the meaning of such a clash. She urges that researchers seek answers to the following questions.

What world views do basic writers bring to college? What is the new world view demanded in college? And, do basic writers have to give up the world views they bring to college in order to learn the new world view? (p. 297)

One might argue that the answers to these questions can provide the key to the development of truly useful programs for students with poor basic skills.

Emilie Steele is Associate Professor of Adult Training and Development at the College of Public and Community Service at the University of Massachusetts/Boston. She regularly teaches reading, writing and study skills to students entering the college with the poorest of skills. She is committed to the idea that skills are best taught in the context of a content area and is currently involved in a project to integrate the teaching of reading, writing and math skills throughout the college's curriculum.

Between Paulo Freire and Tom Sticht: Adult Education and Job Training at Boston Technical Center[1]

by Stuart Gedal

Introduction

For two years, my colleague, Joan Ford, and I spent Friday mornings meeting 300 people — one by one — in a small, dusty room that had plenty of windows and sunlight, and equally plentiful piles of unfiled handouts and lesson plans. We met them in our roles as adult educators. We were there to meet, share, talk, question, explore, assess and come to some agreement on what steps people would need to take in order to get into the job training programs they had chosen. Some of these steps had to do with scheduling, living space, transportation and peace of mind. Some had to do with literacy — with developing reading, writing and math skills that adults felt they needed to reach a goal they had set for themselves.[2]

Not one of the 300 identified being able to read to their children as a goal for their literacy studies. Few wanted to know how to fill out an application form (they had been required to do this before we saw them), and few aspired (as of yet) to be writers, teachers, photographers or artists in their own right. They wanted to learn the reading, writing and math skills they would need to succeed in training programs that were being run by job trainers, not adult educators. They wanted to get jobs or find new jobs that required more skills or offered more pay. They had responded to the availability of a *training-linked* literacy program.

Project ADVANCE, set up as such a program at Boston Technical Center, opened its doors in August of 1985. ADVANCE operated from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. four days per week, offering 16 hours of individual and group instruction. The instructional design was competency-based, open-entry and open-exit, with individual learners having definite completion date goals linked to their ability levels and the start dates of various job training programs. Each day there was at least one structured group activity — spelling, dictation, a problem-solving/counseling session and any number of ad hoc small groups.

ADVANCE used a large, sunny room with a variety of spaces. Learners could sit at the high shop chairs and shop work tables that lined the walls, share a table in the middle of the room with other learners or hide behind a bookcase that served as a divider for our group work area. Many of the usual cast of ABE books (almost all at a beginning or pre-GED level), specialized handouts developed by ADVANCE staff and filed in drawers, and computer software (both packaged and staff-developed) were used for instruction.

Project ADVANCE provides one example of an adult education/training link. Before we look at this link, it might be useful to define the gaps the link was trying to fill.

Part I: A Look into the Gap

Within the community of adult education practitioners, honest differences of opinion exist about such issues as the role of volunteers, workplace adult education and whether or not adult literacy and ESL should be linked to job training. It is interesting that these issues have emerged around the agenda for adult education defined by national public awareness efforts, such as PLUS (Project Literacy-U.S.), and the growing interest in employment-related basic skills. Increased awareness of literacy has created increased awareness of literacy providers. We've been asked to clarify who we are, what we do and what we can't or won't do. Should adult education, for example, be linked to job training at all?

In Massachusetts, the MassJobs Council has noted that $23 million a year is spent by state departments on adult basic education, including ESL. Of this amount, $12 million is spent by the Department of Public Welfare and the Department of Employment and Training, while only $7 million goes through the Department of Education. Even with a tremendous Executive Office of Communities and Development effort ($2.7 million) funded through public housing authorities and the Gateway Cities ESL Program, the greatest growth in adult literacy and adult basic education has been taking place in employment-related literacy efforts.

Political reaction among adult educators to this relatively new presence has been very strong and very divided. Some adult learning centers, previously totally dependent on the less-than-cost budgets provided through the U.S. and Massachusetts Department of Education, have welcomed the opportunity to broaden their funding base and receive per student reimbursements at rates that more closely resemble actual costs. On the other hand, some smaller programs have spoken out against the very presence of these monies in our system because they represent, ultimately, an agenda for adult literacy set by the business community. Training-related literacy is perceived as inherently opposed to the adult learner's "real" needs.

The Training Side

Within the state's job training community itself, from the program up to the legislative level, there has long been a sense that learner-oriented, community-based programs, even those administered by large school departments or school agencies, just don't focus enough on improving learners' skills in measurable ways and therefore improve skills at an alarmingly inconsistent rate.

For job trainers, adult education's intake, assessment and referral systems are too amorphous. The language and methods adult educators use to measure and report learners' skill levels are criticized not only because they are not useful for performance-based contracting, but because of a deeply-held belief by job trainers that they may not be very useful to the learners themselves.

Job trainers with a background in education are likely to have been trained in traditional teaching methods and to rely on standardized measurements of academic skill. Not at home with informal inventories, and compelled by funding sources to rely on nationally-normed standardized tests, many job trainers have opted to simply set up their own pre-vocational adult education programs, even where partnerships with adult education programs would benefit both the agencies and the learners themselves. In one case, a job training agency set up a pre-vocational adult education program three blocks away from a large, very successful adult learning center. The situation in that neighborhood seemed to have evolved from a communication gap into an open battle for funds and students.

Job training interfaces on a variety of levels with the business community, particularly with human resource managers on the one hand and presidents or vice presidents involved with policy issues on the other. Job training centers often look and feel a lot more like private-sector non-profits than like educational institutions. Dress codes for staff are not uncommon. Decision-making is more hierarchical and less collegial than in school department-based adult education programs, never mind collectively run community-based organizations. When help is needed for specific projects, consultants are regularly hired to perform tasks which might be shared by directors and teachers in adult education.

Attorneys, developers/proposal writers, accountants and super word-processing temporaries, all regularly move in and out of job training organizations on a consulting basis. There are several private for-profit training firms who are hired on a consulting type of arrangement as well — they come in, set up a particular job training program, run it for a fixed period of time, and then leave. This gives job training a very different feel than you get in an adult education program where a director sits down with seven teachers every week or two for a staff meeting and decisions are made collegially, and in some places by vote or even consensus. In adult education there is often an underlying sense of building a school — an institution with a past, present and future. This kind of institution-building and group sense may call for a very different kind of leadership and different range of leadership skills than running a year-to-year grant driven job training program.

Values

Finally, there is a widely shared sense within the adult basic education community that it is not just adult learners who need to evolve and change. As a matter of social justice, and a practical matter of addressing root causes, many adult educators feel that their programs should be part of a broader process of social change, both political and cultural. In some programs, there is an emphasis on developing a critical perspective on social issues and on using teaching methods that develop the confidence and skills learners can use to become politically active in their communities. Education is seen as a developmental and transformational process, for the individual and for the community.

While not all adult educators share these views, there is a program or cluster of teachers that reflects them in practically every city or town in Massachusetts. They are a recognizable part of the spectrum of thinking that adult education teachers deal with from day to day. In the job training world, this perspective is not widely held, and institutionally, when adult educators look at the career paths of job trainers, the funding agencies and the policy-making bodies that create streams of funding, we don't expect this kind of critical perspective on the training side.

In Massachusetts, adult educators haven't worked as a community to define the adult education/job training link in terms that are comfortable for adult education providers and adult learners. Many who are critical of job training's agenda have resisted this dialogue altogether. The vacuum is being filled by ad hoc program decisions to link or not to link with job training, but it has also created the danger that others will define that link for us. Under mandate from the state legislature, new leadership provided within the Department of Education and the Commonwealth Literacy Campaign have begun this process on the policy level. Taking a look at a job training/education link that worked can help coordinators, teachers, counselors and adult learners to become involved in this process.

Boston Technical Center

Boston Technical Center was established in 1977 as the Job Training Center, a program of the Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (EDIC). EDIC is a private non-profit agency set up by the City of Boston. EDIC's mission has been to redevelop abandoned industrial areas within Boston. EDIC has done an especially effective job advocating for, and creating, light manufacturing zones, saving and creating blue collar jobs. The Job Training Center, funded largely with federal grant money, did well in developing specialized job training — well enough to survive the various consolidations and reorganizations of the Emergency Employment Act, CETA and JTPA programs that provided its funding.

In 1985, the renamed Boston Technical Center (BTC) incorporated and became accredited as a post-secondary non-collegiate school, but still maintained an affiliation with EDIC. Accreditation opened up the possibility of Pell Grants and other forms of financial aid for low-income trainees who might be over-income for the grant funded entitlements that pay for job training. BTC could go "upscale" a little bit — maintaining its grant funded base while expanding to reach a Pell Grant-eligible clientele of low paid workers seeking to upgrade their skills. BTC hoped to maintain its service to welfare recipients, displaced workers and Boston's low-income communities while positioning itself to compete with the likes of Sylvania Technical School or Wentworth Institute.

The Learner's Obstacles

Even as BTC broadened its focus in hopes of capturing a broader student base and revenue flow, its staff became increasingly concerned about the number of highly-motivated low income Boston residents who were coming in for BTC intakes but were being turned away because of their lack of basic skills. Welfare and JTPA-eligible clients often lacked the reading, writing, math and listening skills that were needed to benefit from job training and be placed in a job. It made little sense for BTC to admit many of these potential trainees to their programs. The dominant work culture, after all, had already strewn plenty of obstacles in the path of those of BTC's trainees who had all the basic skills they needed.

Although BTC delivered on its promise to place graduating trainees in jobs paying at least $6-$7 per hour to start, these wages barely exceeded the real income of many welfare recipients who would lose some of their housing subsidy, and all of their transportation, food stamps, medicaid and childcare benefits within a year of entering the work force. Many forces — the lack of affordable childcare, the disruptive and growing drug culture in many of Boston's low-income communities, prejudice against welfare recipients among prospective co-workers and supervisors, and racial and cultural bias against those who were minority — could weigh heavily against the success of most of BTC's trainees. When someone coming through BTC's door didn't have the reading, writing, math or listening skills that they would need to be successful in job training, it made these other obstacles seem insurmountable.

There were, to be sure, two sets of concerns at work here. Without basic skills, the person trying to enter job training wasn't likely to experience success on a personal level. For a low-literacy adult, training at BTC might turn into another ego-damaging experience, and there was enough concern and integrity among the staff that taking in trainees who would drop out or fail, and maybe never try again, just wasn't on the agenda. At the same time, without successful trainees who had the skill levels and other qualities needed to get hired, BTC wouldn't have enough completing, job-placed students to keep its doors open, since it was reimbursed through performance-based contracts. Failing students would either drop out or be an "embarrassment" when it came time to renew funding for future years. There is a mere shade of difference between this kind of concern and the practice generally referred to as "creaming" (selecting only those trainees who are most likely to succeed).

BTC attempted to refer adult learners who needed work on basic skills to the network of literacy providers in the city. People were referred to neighborhood-based programs throughout Boston, but there was neither sufficient staff nor organizational ties to make this kind of referral system work. Those who were referred often didn't enroll. Those who did enroll had no supported route back to BTC or the job training system.

There was also no way to sustain the original motivation that had brought them from Roxbury, South Boston, Dorchester, Brighton or Charlestown all the way out to South Station and then beyond to BTC at the old Boston Army Base. Those coming to BTC had decided to seek out job training. We interviewed some 250 native English-speaking adults who came to BTC to get training but who were diagnosed as lacking the basic skills required to enter the training they had chosen. Of these, fewer than 60 had attended adult basic education classes — less than 25%. People didn't perceive of themselves as having a literacy or basic skills problem. They were motivated by the concept of having a different, more skilled job and/or a better income. Being turned down by BTC was perceived as a failure and that sense of failure wouldn't be erased by going "back to school," which is how many people heard the message that they were being referred to adult education or ESL programs. The implication is that even with a better referral system among ABE and ESL programs for BTC to link up to, these adults might not have sustained their motivation to stick with an ABE or ESL program outside of a job training environment.

Some defenders of making a strong adult education/job training link feel that this points to one of the key issues in constructing a training link, curriculum and instructional methods: do existing ABE and ESL programs offer focused enough curricula or teaching methodologies to help training-oriented learners reach their goals in realistic amounts of time? It's not simply ABE or ESL's public image that has failed to attract some of these learners. Learners certainly research the programs they're about to enter, even if their style is not to come right out and confront us with the question, "What will I be working on if I come to your class?" and "How does that relate to my goal?" By talking to other learners, by experiencing a program's intake process and coming to classes, they are certain to find out the answers to these questions and vote with their feet if they're not satisfied that the program is meeting their needs.

Part II: A Closer Look at the Link

Boston Technical Center staff were turned down when they applied for funding to the nascent Boston Adult Literacy Initiative to fund their on-site adult education program. They were referred by the City to Jobs for Youth Boston, Inc., for technical assistance to further develop their ideas and hone their proposal. David Rosen, then Associate Director at Jobs for Youth, recommended that BTC look at the Adult Competency Education (ACE) system developed by the Educational Special Projects Office of San Mateo County, California. Beginning as an adult basic education special project, ACE involved the development of an adult basic skills curriculum that was specific to the basic skills used in particular jobs and particular job training programs.

ACE was based on actual observation in the field of reading, writing and math skills. A team of 6 observers visited 100 job sites, observing and interviewing workers in daycare centers, machine shops, hospitals, trucking terminals and retail stores. Each observation/interview lasted for an hour and a half. Additional time was spent gathering and discussing reading materials, forms, math formulas, diagrams and anything else that was used to perform job tasks.

For each job that was observed, a list of tasks performed was developed and then rewritten as a list of "job competencies." Each of these competencies represented a statement of a task needed to perform a given job. An adult education teacher then suggested instructional objectives describing the basic skills the worker used to perform the task. Then, for each of these objectives, a "test task" was developed, testing the objective in a job context. Altogether, some 69 "Competency-based Job Descriptions" were compiled using this process.

The project director, Joseph Cooney, had been looking for a "taxonomy" of generic basic skills (an ordered list) that would provide a common thread for the competencies used in the job descriptions that were being developed. As the number of job and basic skills competencies proliferated, finding a taxonomy became more urgent if adult education instructors were to be able to build on the competency-based job descriptions to design work-related basic skills assessments, curricula and instructional programs.

Cooney found a servicable taxonomy that had been developed for a similar generic/basic skill linking project in Canada. *The Taxonomy of Instructional Objectives*[3] was comprehensive without being cumbersome. Unlike CCP (U.S. Basics' Comprehensive Competencies Program), which has some 2,000 skills, the *Taxonomy* had 580, and had been developed to include some higher reading skills closely related to job tasks.

To continue the project's work, Cooney turned to the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) to take the next step of developing a basic skills assessment built around the reading, writing and math tasks identified in each job description. These assessments were called Entry Standards Assessments (ESA's). These were criterion-referenced tests (related to a specified content, a specific range of skills) rather than norm-referenced (related to the average achievement level of some sample group, such as sixth graders). While they were teacher-made and specific to each program site, they *were* standardized. For example, at Boston Technical Center, we developed grades and cutoff points for admission to job training or to adult education based on a dry run of each test on groups of adult students already in job training. We had already "measured" their skill levels on a commercially-published standardized test (the SRA Index), and compared these results with actual performance in class and the instructor's own assessments.

Physically and administratively, the ESA's were friendlier than the TABE or the ABLE[4], but less friendly than the homemade informal reading inventories we so often use for initial assessment in adult basic education. ESA's are xeroxed, rather than commercially printed, and can be administered in about an hour. They are not designed to be used as timed tests, although it becomes clear after using them that many less skilled learners require more time to complete them.

Why ESA's?

First, the TABE, ABLE, and SRA do work well to admit those with high basic skills to job training programs. They work the least well for those adults with low basic skills whom we, as adult educators and job trainers, are the most interested in serving.

When an adult learner takes the TABE, the connection between the test items and the learner's goals is not self-evident. A counselor or teacher needs to be available to "explain" the connection. How many of us, in fact, apologize for the test? It is, after all, difficult to explain the link between reading a passage about a snack food called "Nutrasnak Clusters" (on the TABE, Form 5, Level D) and being able to read a shop manual to problem-solve in a welding course.

The TABE and ABLE give grade level equivalent scores and then job training programs correlate these with the grade level ability that job training instructors indicate as necessary for their courses. This may mean, for example, that entry level scores are correlated to the reading difficulty level of the main textbooks or manuals used in a training course. The TABE and ABLE are in this way correlated with job training, not fitted with it.

This means some people may be admitted to job training who don't have the reading, writing or math skills they need to do well. Others, who have all the skills they need, may be excluded.

Tests that determine a *level* of ability don't necessarily tell us much about the skills or information a person knows well, or the ones they'll be called upon to use in job training or other specific contexts. If job trainers rely solely on standardized test scores, do they exclude people from job training who have low scores but the right mix of skills? Is there a way in which excluding people from job training on the basis of this kind of score alone perpetuates the traditional exclusion of women and minorities from more highly skilled, higher-paying employment?

ESA's are aimed at screening-in people who have the right mix of skills while giving clear information to those who need to improve the quality or range of their abilities. While ESA's are "gatekeepers" (screening tests), this gate swings in two directions, and takes a major step towards eliminating the rhetoric of grade level equivalents that handicaps so many adult education conversations.

Finally, ESA's are oriented towards concrete behaviors and skills, and help adults define and measure the gaps between what they want to be able to do and what they can do now. The TABE and the SRA Reading Index do try to link their results to competencies and skills, but they do this by analyzing the test and comparing the generic skills on the tests to the generic skills used by the Department of Labor in its encyclopedic index of job descriptions. The result is competencies that are too generic to be effective for adults in goal-setting and strategizing about basic skills needs and job training goals.

How are ESA's Given?

At BTC, adult learners came for a general orientation, which included a walking tour of the school, a slide show or videotape, discussion about funding and financial aid, etc. Prospective trainees would decide which of five job training programs they were the most interested in and come back a second day for assessment. Since ESA's are specific to the job training program a learner has chosen, there had to be an ESA day for welding, one for copy machine repair, another for medical secretary, etc. Incoming students also had to be grouped because we had added listening skills to reading, writing and math, and, realistically, the listening portion of the test had to be given up front to the whole group. The students then proceeded to work on the rest of the ESA at their own pace. An equivalent form of each ESA was developed. After a student had been in adult education classes and had gained or improved the skills they needed to enter job training, they were given the equivalent form of the ESA. They entered job training if they achieved a passing score.

How are ESA's Developed?: The Dialogue Process

Each training program at BTC needed to have its own ESA. We built them by using a dialogue process similar to the one used in San Mateo County to develop the competency-based job descriptions. An ESA requires observation of job training itself, and careful note-taking to define the tasks related to basic skills that are going on in the training program. We observed the training instructor in class, and met with him or her. (Sometimes, if we thought it was more comfortable or useful, we would meet with the instructor first and observe later.) At the meeting, we sat down over the *Taxonomy* to develop a list of the basic skills that adult learners used to get through a particular training. The most difficult part of the dialogues we would have, especially before the concept was clear in our own minds, was the meaning of "entry standards."

If someone could pass our test, were they ready to be a welder? The answer, of course, was no. What we were defining was a *new* threshold — between literacy/basic skills and job training. If someone "passed" an ESA it meant they were ready for training. Other obstacles aside, it meant that the learner had the basic skills to perform the learning and practice tasks the job trainers would demand of them, including the listening skills to follow oral direction in shops and secretarial laboratories with high voltage equipment, explosive gases, hot metal and other dangers. The ESA addressed adult literacy and basic skills as part of a broader readiness for training, and it took a few conversations for a welding or secretarial instructor to tell us "if you can get them to read a ruler to within one-quarter of an inch, I'll take them to one-sixteenth of an inch" or, "if you can make sure they can use this sample of a medical terminology glossary, I'll struggle with them when it comes to learning the terminology itself."

So, in this case, ruler measurements in quarter inches for welders and finding the correct definitions of two out of three words from a mini-glossary became test items on a Welding ESA and a Medical Secretary ESA respectively. Between the "training side" and the "adult education" side, we struggled constantly with who was making things too easy and who was making things too hard. Importantly, we were talking, and by learning about each other's work, making it more likely that the learners who would "pass through" both our hands would be better able to attain their own goals.

How are ESA's Used?: Dialogues with Learners

A second dialogue process involved the learners. Looking at the development of the San Mateo system historically, it was set up before the Adult Performance Level (APL) Project[5] had widely circulated its conclusions, and before the explosive growth of the ESL component of adult education programs. The San Mateo County Project filled a gap because the adult education system was then driven by GED instruction. Cooney and his staff had developed a way to shortcut through the hundreds of educational skills adults were being required to work on because GED preparation was often the only remedial education or literacy model that was accessible.

When we looked at the San Mateo system, we wanted it to communicate more with our adult learners. We saw not 580 competencies, but the clusters of 15-20 instructional objectives that any one learner would have to focus on for the job training of his or her choice. With the goals of learner self-sufficiency and learner ownership in mind, we reworded the *Taxonomy's* instructional objectives as we used them, refining and refining the language they used in order to make them clearer and more useful to our learners. We developed a "Learning Contract," basically a checklist of the basic skills tested on each ESA, and filled these out based on the learner's performance on the ESA itself. To the instructional objectives tested by the ESA (the actual "entry standards"), we added "Student Choice" as a chance to bring back into focus learning goals identified during the intake interviews or writing sample that the learner provided. We also added a paragraph stating our commitment to work with the learner and place him or her in job training, and the learner's commitment to work on the competencies checked off on the list. We had the students sign the checklist after they did some work on their first day of class as a symbolic act of part-ownership over the process of their learning.

ESA's satisfy the training world's need for cutoffs and provide some standardization. At the same time, ESA's meet another need, an especially deeply felt one our students have: to know where they're at and gain some control over where they are going. With no practice in evaluating their own performance as learners, and few explicit and articulated standards, how can adult learners develop such skills and the flexibility they may help them achieve?

At Boston Technical Center, the ESA's, the Learning Contracts/Checklists, and the instructional materials we selected or developed, all supported our dialogues with job training teachers and learners. They reinforced the idea that we were going to focus on and link with the learner's real motivation: to succeed in training and get on with a new kind of work.

A key part of the ongoing conversations we built with learners was the very intake interview itself. In BTC's centralized intake process, the ESA's, SRA Reading Index, SRA Math Index, and a writing sample were used to screen applicants into adult education or directly into job training. Cutoffs were established by dry-running the tests in conjunction with job training instructors. Applicants who got 80% of the total ESA items correct, and performed perfectly on 70% of the competencies tested, were admitted directly to job training. Those who scored more than 70%, with 60% of the competencies perfect, were referred to Project ADVANCE. Those scoring lower were interviewed for ADVANCE if they had other factors going for them — experience in the field, strong support from an advocating agency, exceptional communication skills, etc. A few, with very low scores and few other apparent sources of support were transferred to other job training programs, ABE, ESL, Displaced Homemakers, Transitional Work, or other appropriate programs recommended in each specific case by the Project ADVANCE staff.

At first we had an interview "team" that met with the incoming learner: the ADVANCE coordinator, a classroom instructor and our counselor, who dedicated a quarter of a full-time slot to ADVANCE. The interview agenda was to do test scores last.

We wanted to hear the incoming learner's self-perception, level of organization, and willingness to work in a cooperative group as much as discuss test results and basic skill levels, for these were qualities that would be tested over and over again in job training and in ADVANCE as well. We had lots of applicants who were referred by the Department of Welfare's Employment and Training (ET Choices) program, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and the Workers Assistance Center, for whom BTC was an option. We had to hear if it was a "choice," and if it wasn't, we had to decide on the spot whether we wanted to try to convince the person it should be. We tried to find these things out by talking — about how long it took to get to BTC that day, how the person got there, and — if they had a family — about their children, how the children would be cared for during training, and how they'd attend if their regular daycare person was sick or otherwise couldn't provide the care.

We talked a bit about BTC, about their choice of one progam over another, how much money they thought they would make after job placement (had they listened during orientation?) and if that was enough to get by. We also started talking about skills. What tasks did they think a welder/medical secretary, etc. performed during the work day? What tasks did they think they would like? What would they dislike? What things did the applicant think they would need to learn or improve on in order to do the kind of work they had chosen? It sounds like a bit of an interrogation now, but it was done in a conversational kind of way, with the idea of building on the learner's awareness that ADVANCE was serious, about them and their goals, and really tied to job training rather than school performance.

We concluded by going through the test itself — not just reporting scores — and almost invariably the learners had gotten more than half the items right. The rejection message, often delivered over the phone ("Well, I'm sorry you didn't pass. We can't take you") that BTC had been offering months before became "You did great on this, and these are all correct; but you need to work more on these..." which we delivered while flipping through the test, sitting right next to the learner.

We made time when we suspected that someone's real skills weren't reflected in a bad performance on a test item. We would have them re-do test items on the spot, on a separate sheet of paper — not to change their grade and admit them right to training — but to let them know that we agreed with their self-assessment ("I really know how to do this. I just forgot it on the test."), or alternatively, to create the opportunity for them to decide *for themselves* that they really needed to *learn* how to do it. The ESA, as useful as it was, didn't create this conversation. Project ADVANCE worked because the San Mateo Project materials gave us the space to address the training world's need for measurable results very early in the life of Project ADVANCE and bring adult education principles to bear on the instructional part of the program. The ESA format helped greatly in creating this conversation, and making it standard procedure as the project developed and the interview "team" became a single instructor or the project coordinator doing the interview.

Success

I've spent a lot of time describing the two upfront pieces of Project ADVANCE — the initial development of ESA's and the interview/conversation process — because I think that education, like family life, is a developmental process, and as in all human development activities, initial bonding — or the lack of it — has a lot to do with successful and happy outcomes. ADVANCE started with five students and a bunch of books from my basement (that's the training world for you — hired Monday, students on Tuesday!), and in its first year 75% of those admitted got into job training, most at BTC, with the others admitted to Action for Boston Community Development (clerical) and Training, Inc. (clerical). During the 1986-87 program year, we served some 100 students, and 80% of them entered job training. We noticed differences in achievement between the displaced workers whom we had contracted to serve (a 90% success rate), the JTPA-supported learners (85%) and the welfare recipients (up from 70 to 73% in the second year). We also noticed in class that the social, racial and cultural barriers between displaced workers/unemployed and welfare recipients began to break down when we organized activities around job training goals (future welders over here, future medical secretaries over there) and created situations where learners needed to depend on someone they'd be working with in job training. During this last year, 85% of those enrolled in ADVANCE entered job training, with increasing enrollment of ESL students who worked on their math in order to enter an ESL/Machine Tool training program at BTC. From July through November of 1988, ADVANCE has maintained its 85% success rate despite severe financial pressures on the program.[6]

Future Directions

ADVANCE was filled with much promise, and much of that promise (perhaps more than should have been expected) was indeed fulfilled. My personal goal for ADVANCE was to work through the native English speakers to create an ESL/ADVANCE that would provide generic conversation classes (using training-oriented materials wherever they could be used) and integrate ESL learners with native English speakers to develop many reading and writing skils focused on specific training goals. An ESL/ADVANCE could serve as a training link between the upper level of ESL in community-based programs, whose completing students often test too low on the TABE or ABLE for admission to job training. As with the link between upper level ESL and GED/Adult Diploma, this link is a sorely needed one that will inevitably be added on by existing ESL programs in an ad hoc fashion if it is not done systematically through programs like ADVANCE.

Another need in the community is for ADVANCE and job training graduates to have credentials. One purpose of the San Mateo model and BTC's adoption of it was to avoid the long haul it takes to get a GED/Adult Diploma in order to encourage more participation by low literacy adults in job training. Many adult educators express a very real concern that training-linked literacy is too narrow, and lack of a credential is often identified as part of that narrowness.

In thinking about this at BTC, we felt that over time, this narrowness could be addressed. There is more than one "learning moment" in an adult's learning life, and the fact that a program doesn't cram it all into one of these moments is hardly a criticism of concern. If learners have established a positive relationship with an institution and found a teaching approach they like — such as that offered by BTC and Project ADVANCE — a follow-up GED/Adult Diploma Program that is worksite-based makes lots of sense for training program graduates after they have settled in for six months or a year in their new jobs. This also suggests putting time into developing a work-related GED skills curriculum, an interesting challenge that might be a real contribution to the growing workplace literacy field.

Another expansion of Project ADVANCE could benefit beginning readers reading below the tested fifth grade reading level that corresponded to the very lowest reading abilities of successful ADVANCE students. A "O-4" ADVANCE, and an ADVANCE for learning disabled adults would require having JTPA-related funding sources lengthen their time frames from the six-month and one-year service limits to two and three-year perspectives for basic skills. I think that with good curriculum work, using the San Mateo approach, adult educators who work with new literates and learning disabled readers could develop meaningful training-linked literacy that would close in on the reading levels needed for ADVANCE and even for trainings that require 8th and 9th grade reading level equivalent skills.

Closing the Gap

The Massachusetts Commonwealth Literacy Campaign, by looking at the number of seats for adult literacy, adult education and ESL, and some recent census data, concluded that current adult literacy and adult education programs serve 3-5% of the adults who could benefit from educational services.[7] This confirms some recent projections by Jonathan Kozol and even Hunter and Harman's estimates of our effective service levels, which go back to the 1970's.

While many low literacy adults are doing "just fine, thank you," and don't need to be "reached" at all, a large number, who want to get or improve their literacy and numeracy skills to better their standard of living and enjoyment of life, are not having this need met by the current configuration of adult literacy and job training services. If the experience of the last three years at Boston Technical Center is any example, many of these training-focused literacy learners never entered the adult literacy system and so are not even among the system's dropouts!

Project ADVANCE showed that adult education principles *can* be used to create good learning environments that help learners meet their goals of getting into and being successful in job training. Far better models than those used by ADVANCE will certainly be developed, but it is unlikely they'll be developed without taking the personal and professional "risk" of becoming involved in job training. I had days at BTC when I felt I had "betrayed a cause" by "leaving" the education side to work for the training side when there was a pitched battle going on.

In the time it took to read this article, at least one adult learner was turned away from a job training program in or near Boston because he or she lacked the quality of English conversation or the basic skills that the program required for admission. To help such learners reach the goals they've set, we need to exercise caution when we decide that making a link or not between job training and adult education is a matter of principle rather than a policy that responds to learner needs.

Footnotes

1. Paulo Freire, author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, is a strong advocate of participatory, learner-centered literacy teaching for adults. His work is aimed at developing "critical consciousness" about social, political and economic contradictions in society that will enable people to act for social change. Tom Sticht, author of *Functional Context Education*, is an advocate of occupationally related basic skills programs. Sticht has done extensive studies on the reading skills of youths entering the military and their experiences in military training. He has been critical of the use of traditional concepts of reading difficulty levels in adult literacy and emphasizes the importance of context in literacy learning.

2. Along the way, others took part in this intake process and contributed to its contents: teachers Elizabeth Cohen and Ellen Aronson, and couselors Donna Kelley and Karen Shack, helped make these interviews

worthwhile for us and for the students.

3. Kawula, Walter D., and Smith, Arthur DeW., *Generic Skills*. Research and Development Station, Department of Manpower and Immigration. Prince Albert, Sasckatchewan, 1975.

4. TABE is the Test of Adult Basic Education published by CTB/McGraw-Hill, Monterey, California, 1987. This is a "pencils and dots" test battery of reading, writing and math skills which reports scores in grade level equivalents. Tests in each skill area are designed in four grade ranges from 2.6 to 12.9. The ABLE is the Adult Basic Learning Examination published by Psychological Corporation/Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. San Antonio, Texas, 1986. The ABLE is also a battery of tests, but presents some items orally. There are three grade level equivalent ranges for the ABLE tests, starting with grade 1 and going up to grade 12. Long out of favor because it relied so heavily on close vocabulary items to test reading levels, the 1986 revision represents a substantial change.

5. Adult Performance Level Project, *Final Report: Adult Performance Level Study*. University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1977.

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7. Stein, Sondra G., "Building a Literacy Campaign in Massachusetts" in World Education *Reports*, Winter, 1989 (in press).

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